CREATE A STRONGER CAMPAIGN! 259

Dragon®

MAGAZINE

220 RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Build Your Own Fantasy Kingdoms

Villains Conquer The World!

$4.95 USA £3.50 UK

$4.95US $6.50CAN 05

0 09281 01823 0

PLANESCAPE TORMENT & DESIGN: ©1999 Interplay Productions. All Rights Reserved. Bioware Infinity Engine ©1998 Bioware Corp. Portions ©1998 TSR, Inc. Torment, Planescape, the Planescape logo, Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, the AD&D logo, and the TSR logo are trademarks of TSR, Inc., a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc., and are used by Interplay under license. All Rights Reserved. Interplay, the Interplay logo, Black Isle Studios and the Black Isle Studios logo, and "By Gamers. For Gamers." are trademarks of Interplay Entertainment Corp. All Rights Reserved. Bioware Infinity Engine and the BioWare logo are trademarks of Bioware Corp. All Rights Reserved. Windows®95 and Windows®98 are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. All Rights Reserved. All other trademarks and copyrights are property of their respective owners.

The Next Epic RPG from Black Isle Studios, the Producers of Baldur's Gate™ and Fallout™2

PLANESCAPE™ TORMENT™

Welcome to Sigil, the "City of Doors," a place with gates that lead anywhere in existence, provided you have the proper key. It is a neutral ground and watering hole for races across the multiverse, all under the watchful shadow of the Lady of Pain, the enigmatic ruler of the city. It is a place where the word is mightier than the sword, where thought defines reality, where belief has the power to reshape worlds and change the laws of physics.

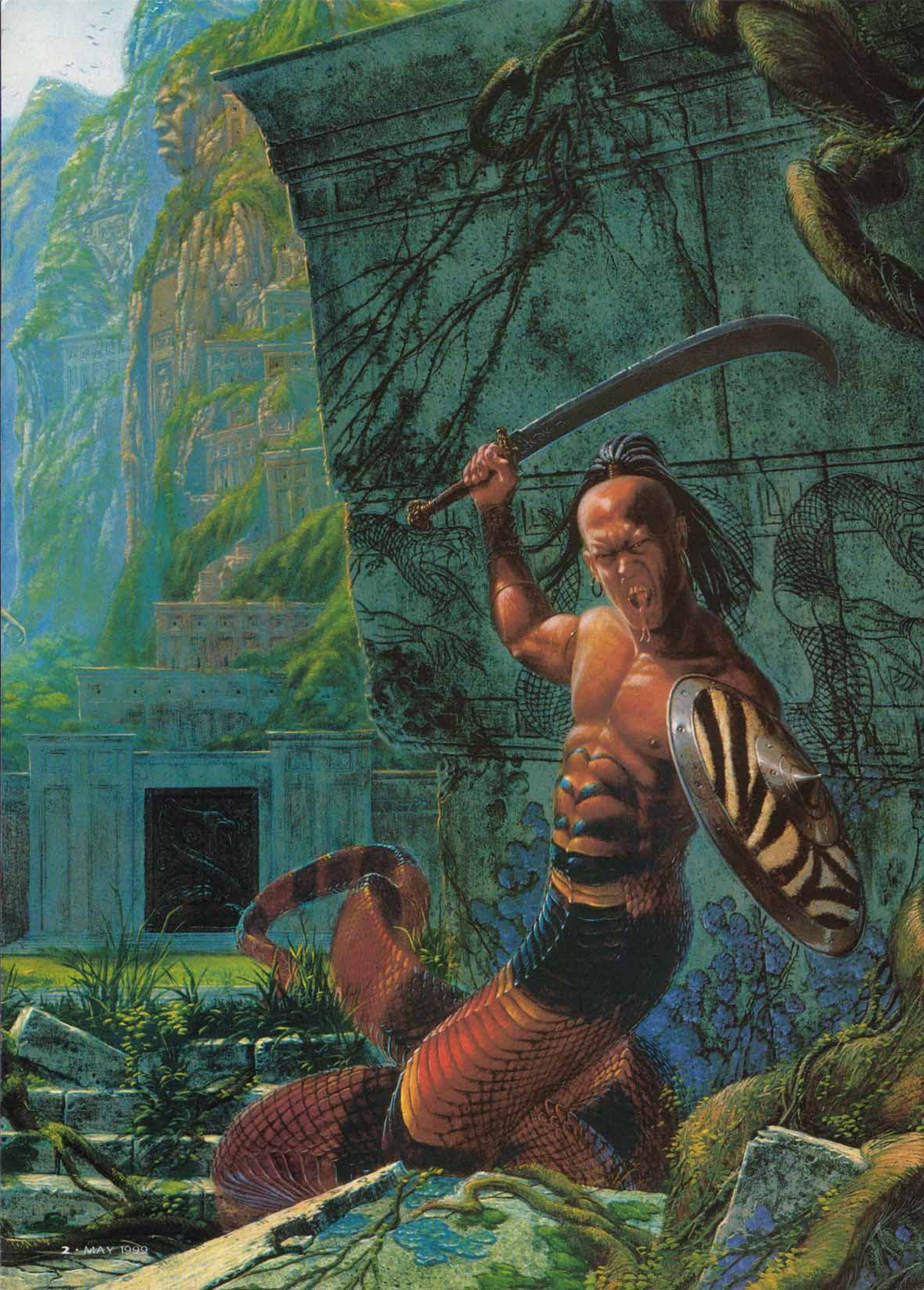
Character creation is just the beginning - throughout the game your character adapts to fit your own personal gaming style.

The Planescape universe is a setting you've NEVER experienced before, filled with sharp-edged visuals, bizarre adversaries, and strange magics.

Encounter inventory items with personalities. Manage an unpredictable party of the strangest allies to walk the faces of alternate planes.

You can regenerate, speak with the dead, and have magical immunities. You're a power to be RECKONED with. Unfortunately, so is everyone else.

www.planescape-torment.com



THE CAMPAIGN

Dragon®

Issue # 259 Volume XXIII, No. 12 May 1999

FEATURES

Designer Demesnes
Mark A. Hart
At last, a simple point system to build fantasy kingdoms for your AD&D® game.
28

Master of the World
Stephen Kenson
For the villains of any roleplaying campaign, the hows and whys of world domination.
42

Miscellaneous Mishaps
Dawn Ibach
Not every random encounter must lead to the MONSTROUS MANUAL™ tome. Add these wilderness encounter tables to your AD&D campaign.
49

Fiction

Stolen Dreams
Elaine Cunningham
From the Friendly Arms to the long arm of the Harpers, Sophie can't escape her destiny.
52

ARES

92 **Armed & Dangerous**
Bruce R. Cordell Add the weapons of Fallout 2 to your post-apocalypse ALTERNITY® campaign.

DEPARTMENTS

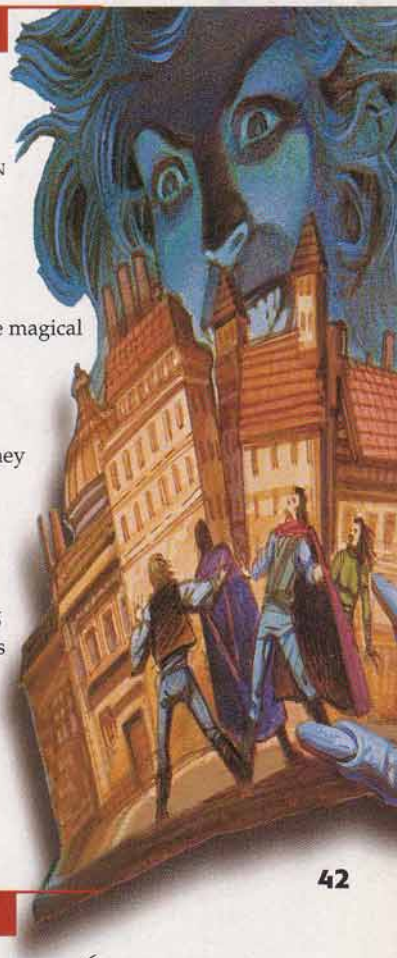
60 **Rogues Gallery**
Elaine Cunningham Three villains from the new FORGOTTEN REALMS novel, *Dream Spheres.*

64 **Dragon's Bestiary**
Johnathan M. Richards
Worse than ticks or lice are these magical "Parasites and Symbiotes."

70 **Wyrms of the North**
Ed Greenwood The journey to "Z" is fulfilled with "The Laughing Dragon."

76 **Bazaar of the Bizarre**
Brian Dunnel After a long day's work, now your characters can "Sleep on It."

82 **Dungeon Mastery**
Brian Dunnel Here's how to answer when your players whine, "What Do You Mean, We Lost?"



42

COLUMNS

THE WYRM'S TURN™ 6
D-MAIL™ 8
FORUM 12
DUNGEONCRAFT 18
SAGE ADVICE 22
PC PORTRAITS 80
ROLE MODELS 86
CONVENTION CALENDAR 89
DRAGONMIRTH™ 104
KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE 106
TSR™ PREVIEWS 108
PROFILES 112

28

ON THE COVER

Cover artist Stephen Daniele took a personal approach in creating his painting of "The Campaign." No, the setting isn't the family estate, but the menacing figure is none other than his high school friend, Dwight Philips. Stephen cast him as the major villain from their long-running campaign. Stephen continues this trend with his illustration on page 28. His wife appears playing the flute.

Custer's

Forgotten Realms
Dream Spheres
Elaine Cunningham
Novel

Arilyn Moonblade returns with Danilo Thann and archenemy Elaith Craulnobar in this tale of heroism and conspiracy set in—where else?—Waterdeep, the City of Splendors.

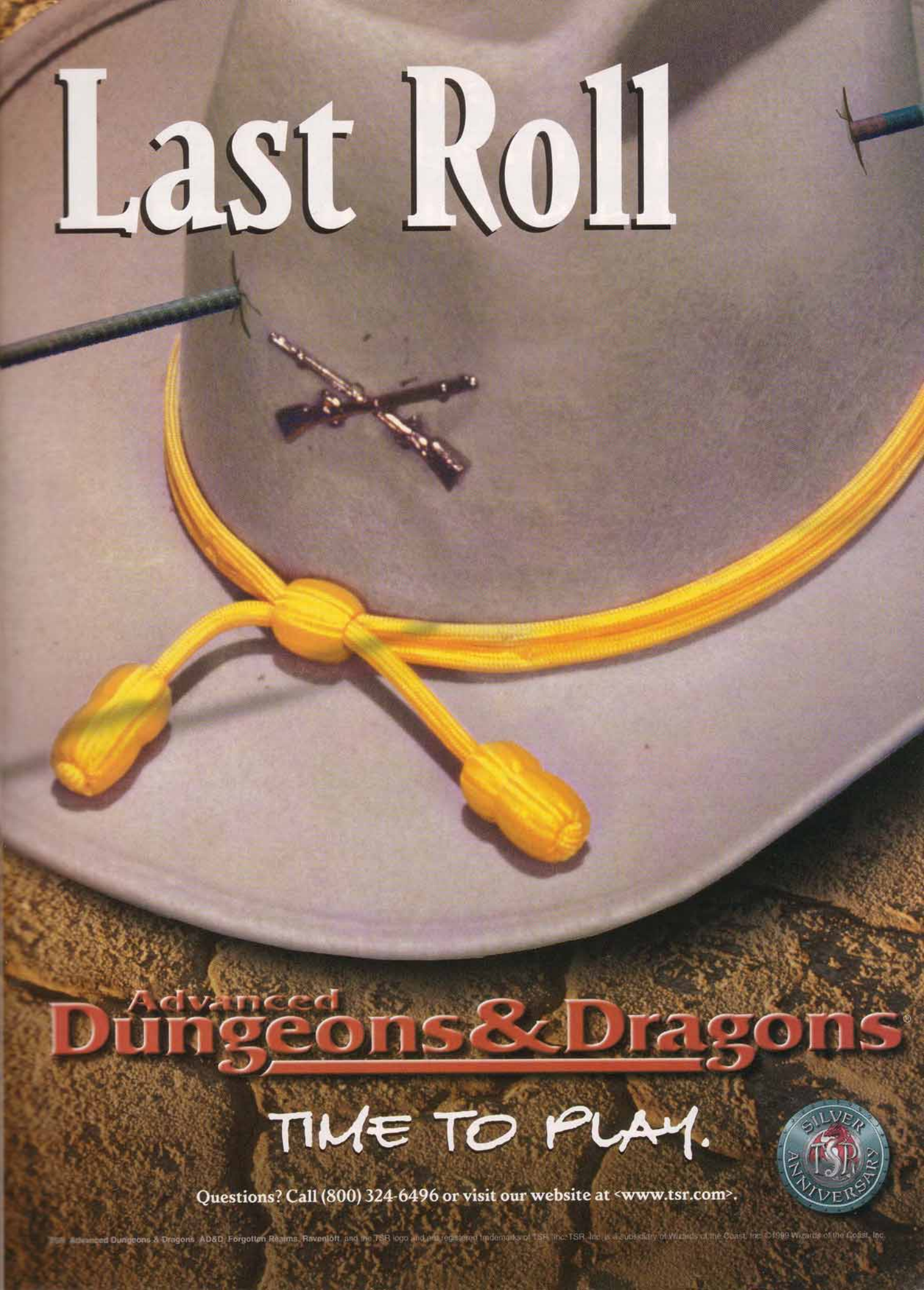
AD&D Ravenloft
Ravenloft *Children of the Night: The Created*
Adventure

Thirteen golems—your lucky number—are presented here with complete descriptions and short adventures. These terrifying creatures fit into an ongoing **Ravenloft** campaign as easily as any **AD&D** setting.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
Priest's Spell
Compendium, Vol. 1
Accessory

Your days of reversing Cure Light Wounds for a little variety are through. Here begins the listing of every spell ever created for the priest class, including many from out-of-print sources. These are the spells you've been praying for.

IN STORES NOW!


Last Roll
Advanced
Dungeons & Dragons®
TIME TO PLAY.
SILVER
TSR
ANNIVERSARY
Questions? Call (800) 324-6496 or visit our website at <www.tsr.com>.
TSR, Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, AD&D, Forgotten Realms, Ravenloft, and the TSR logo are registered trademarks of TSR, Inc. TSR, Inc. is a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©1999 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

The Wyrm's Turn™

Location, Location, Location

It's one thing to populate a world with wizards and dragons, but it's quite another to make the world itself fantastic. That's a trick that too many gamers often overlook. When the DM or game designer puts some thought into the magical nature of the setting itself, however, the game can become far more memorable.

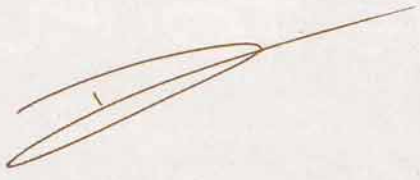
One of the first things most aspiring DMs do is grab some graph paper and sketch out a dungeon. Some of those early attempts can be downright silly, producing slavishly symmetrical complexes full of monsters with no obvious access to food and water, much less the vast hoards of treasure they manage to accumulate. Those that stand out aren't necessarily the scientifically "correct" complexes, either. The ones players best remember are those with fabulous, unexpected features ranging from sunless seas to subterranean jungles—not to mention crashed space ships and buried temples to fish-goddesses.

The Steading of the Hill Giant Chief, White Plume Mountain, Expedition to the Barrier Peaks, The Tomb of Horrors ... there's a reason why even the earliest AD&D® modules were named after their locations. Years after playing those modules, I remember the places—even what they "look" like, though none of us ever saw them except through our minds' eyes—better than the reasons our characters went there in the first place.

Among the most memorable dungeons in official AD&D adventures are those of the DRAGONLANCE® saga. Who can forget the sunken city of Xak Tsaroth or the flying citadel beneath the dwarven enclave of Thorbardin? Even the unabashedly over-the-top Skullcap and stone dragon of Foghaven were unforgettable icons of the larger adventure. Like many other gamers, I played the DRAGONLANCE epic as it was published, and my most persistent images of it are still those fabulous locations.

Even as we focus on the campaign in *DRAGON® Magazine* this month, TSR games is releasing the *DRAGONLANCE Classic 15th Anniversary Edition*, a huge compilation and expansion of the entire DRAGONLANCE saga, including those unforgettable dungeons for both AD&D and SAGA® players. If you've never played these adventures before, here's your chance to explore some of the best dungeon locations ever published. (If you played them back when I did, you might enjoy a return visit.)

Check out this month's contest to add your own efforts to the classic AD&D dungeons, but also write to "DMail" to tell us about the most fantastic locations in your own campaign. We'll print the best letters, as usual, and perhaps you'll see something from another gamer to inspire and expand your own campaign.



Dragon®

Publisher
Wendy Noritake

Executive Editor
Pierce Watters

Editor
Dave Gross

Art Director
Larry Smith

Associate Editor
Chris Perkins

Assistant Editor
Jesse Decker

Designer
Scott Ricker
Peter Whitley

Editorial Assistant
Chris Carlson

Production Manager
John Dunn

Advertising Sales Manager
Bob Henning

Advertising Traffic Coordinator
Bobbi Maas

Circulation Manager
Barbara Blaskowsky

DRAGON® Magazine (ISSN 0279-6848) is published monthly except November (twice monthly) by TSR, Inc., 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055, United States of America. Periodical-class postage paid at Lake Geneva, WI, U.S.A., and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *DRAGON Magazine*, P.O. Box 469107, Escondido, CA 92046, U.S.A. USPS 318-790, ISSN 0279-6848.The postal address for all materials from the United States of America and Canada except subscription orders and change-of-address notices is: *DRAGON Magazine*, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055, U.S.A.

DISTRIBUTION: *DRAGON Magazine* is available from game and hobby shops throughout the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and through a limited number of other overseas outlets. Newsstand distribution throughout the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom is by Curtis Circulation Company, 730 River Road, New Milford, NJ 07646-3048; telephone: (201) 634-7400.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Subscription rates via periodical-class mail are as follows: $34.95 in U.S. funds for 12 issues sent to an address in the U.S.; $52.95 in U.S. funds for 12 issues sent to an address in Canada; £34.95 for 12 issues sent to an address within the United Kingdom; £41.95 for 13 issues sent to an address in the UK; $57.95 in U.S. funds for 12 issues sent by surface mail to any other address. Payment in full must accompany all subscription orders. Methods of payment include checks or money orders made payable to DRAGON Magazine, or charges to valid MasterCard or VISA credit cards; send subscription orders with payments to *DRAGON Magazine*, P.O. Box 469107, Escondido, CA 92046, USA; email dragon@pcspublink.com; phone **1-800-395-7760**. In the United Kingdom, methods of payment include cheques or money orders made payable to TSR Ltd., or charges to a valid ACCESS or VISA credit card; send subscription orders with payments to TSR Ltd., as per that address above. Prices are subject to change without prior notice. The issue expiration of each subscription is printed on the mailing label of each subscriber's copy of the magazine. Changes of address for the delivery of subscription copies must be received at least six weeks prior to the effective date of the change in order to assure uninterrupted delivery.

SUBMISSIONS: All material published in *DRAGON Magazine* becomes the exclusive property of the publisher, unless special arrangements to the contrary are made prior to publication. We welcomes unsolicited submissions of written material and artwork; however, no responsibility for such submissions can be assumed by the publisher in any event. Any submission accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope of sufficient size will be returned if it cannot be published. We strongly recommend that prospective authors write for our writers' guidelines before sending an article to us. In the United States and Canada, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope (9 /2" long preferred) to Writers' Guidelines, c/o *DRAGON Magazine*, at the above address; include sufficient American postage or International Reply Coupons (IRC) with the return envelope.

ADVERTISING: For information on placing advertisements in *DRAGON Magazine*, ask for our rate card. All ads are subject to approval by TSR, Inc. TSR reserves the right to reject any ad for any reason.

Contact: Bob Henning, Advertising Sales Manager, *DRAGON Magazine*, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055, U.S.A., (425) 204-7262. In the northeast, contact: Sig or Scott Buchmayr, Buchmayr Associates, 137 Rowayton Avenue, Rowayton, CT 06853, (203) 855-8834.

Advertisers and/or agencies of advertisers agree to hold TSR, Inc. harmless from and against any loss or expense from any alleged wrongdoing that may arise out of the publication of such advertisements. TSR, Inc. has the right to reject or cancel any advertising contract for which the advertiser and/or agency of advertiser fails to comply with the business ethics set forth in such contract.

DRAGON is a registered trademark of TSR, Inc. Registration applied for in the United Kingdom. All rights to the contents of this publication are reserved, and nothing may be reproduced from it in whole or in part without first obtaining permission in writing from the publisher. Material published in *DRAGON Magazine* does not necessarily reflect the opinions of TSR, Inc. Therefore, TSR will not be held accountable for opinions or misinformation contained in such material.

® designates registered trademarks owned by TSR, Inc. ™ designates trademarks owned by TSR, Inc. Most other product names are trademarks owned by the companies publishing those products. Use of the name of any product without mention of trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status.

* indicates a product produced by a company other than TSR, Inc. Most product names are trademarks owned by the companies publishing those products. The use of the name of any product without mention of its trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status.

©1999 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved. All TSR characters, character names, and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks owned by TSR, Inc. TSR, Inc. is a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Order and Chaos, an eternal struggle of ever shifting elements

© 1996 Mizuno Ryo & Group SNE / CRYSTANIA PRODUCTION COMMITTEE

Awake to Destruction

As the Bell of Wakening tolls, the gods of Crystania face the end of their carefully maintained stasis. Strange forces are on the move in this world of beastmen and warrior gods.

Available on: 4/27/99
Dubbed: $19.98
Subtitled: $29.95

© SA.RO.MW/BA.TX.SE

The Heresy of Forbidden Love is Crystal

The overactive libido of a certain Carrot lands our team of unlikely heroes in more than just hot water as the second highly combustible volume of Sorcerer Hunters takes off like a rocket!

Available on: 4/13/99
Dubbed: $24.95
Subtitled: $29.95

ADV FILMS

Available from 888-COMIC-BOOK and SHOP LOCATOR SE. and other fine stores

Animation for a New Generation™
www.advfilms.com • email: info@advfilms.com

D-Mail™

Keep in Touch!

To share your opinions on this issue of the magazine, post a letter to "D-Mail," *DRAGON® Magazine*, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055, USA. Send email to dmail@wizards.com. Include your ***full name and mailing address*** if you expect your letter to be printed, and let us know how much of that address you'd like printed. (We'll assume city and state otherwise.)

For subscription inquiries, send email to dragon@pcspublink, or call 1 (800) 395-7760.

Happy New Year

Issue #255 was a great way to start the new year! Psionics are one of the most interesting but least-explored aspects of the AD&D® game. Thank you for beginning to rectify the oversight. My favorite article of the issue has to be "The New Illithid Arsenal." I enjoyed it so much that I bought *The Illithiad* after reading it.

I would like to see more articles written in the same format. That is, grouping magical items, equipment, and new monsters under a single theme instead of having separate, unrelated articles. As a DM, these thematically oriented articles are easier to incorporate into a campaign since the components are already interrelated. The one thing I would have added would have been more definite campaign ideas and adventure hooks in which these new items and creatures could be used.

David Roberts
Thornhill, Ontario, Canada

Psionics are one of the most interesting but least-explored aspects of the AD&D game.

Kudos to Andy

I want to compliment Andy Miller on his article "Hidden Agendas" in issue #256. It was well done. Now, if he would give away a few secrets on how we might create secret societies in an already existing world or campaign, that would be magic! I extend my admiration to Scott Rosema as well; his art was transfixing.

I have been a longtime but intermittent reader of *DRAGON® Magazine*. I would go to my game store and thumb through the magazines and occasionally buy one. In a more daring moment –OK, I live a dull life– I decided to subscribe to *DRAGON Magazine* and *DUNGEON® Adventures*. I had some trouble getting the subscriptions started because Wizards of the Coast had just acquired the company. But since the subscriptions started, I have been very pleased. There are always a few things I can use in each issue. Most times there are many things I can use, some with almost no preparation. You have done a fine job with both magazines. I have so much confidence in you that I have just renewed both subscriptions and don't consider it daring at all this time.

Bryan W. Cooper
Riverside, RI

Evolutionary Article

I have always loved your "Dragon Ecology" articles, with only a few exceptions. I do have some complaints—not with the articles themselves but rather with the author's view of evolution.

Many people seem to be under the impression that evolution is an active force that pushes species to their ultimate form. I remember watching an episode of *Star Trek: Voyager* a few months back, in which two of the crew members suddenly began evolving. According to the story, they stole away on a shuttle craft, squeezing a million years of evolution into a few hours, and landed on some M-Class planet. When the ship found them, they had "evolved" into large salamanderlike creatures. I forget how, but they were "de-evolved" into their human forms. The message left by that episode was that humans will "evolve" into another form, that it is in our genetic programming to become salamanders eventually. Well, that's not quite how it works. If those characters experienced a million years of evolution within a few hours while confined to a shuttlecraft, they would have evolved to adapt perfectly to *life in the shuttlecraft*. That's what happens. Those who can adapt survive and breed. And slowly, very slowly, those who are less able to adapt eventually die off.

A few issues back you printed the "Ecology of the Cyclopskin." One footnote remarked on the cyclopskin's dual tear ducts, saying: "Since they only have one eye, evolution has made it easier for them (by giving them two tear ducts)."

No. If they indeed have two tear ducts, it is because it is more efficient. A cyclopskin with only one tear duct would be at a (slight) disadvantage, and therefore less likely to survive.

On another point, the author writes that "Cyclopskin rarely have vision trouble … this is probably an evolutionary adaptation; with only one eye, it's important that the cyclopskin retains strong vision." This is reasonable, only misstated. Cyclopskin would rarely have vision trouble because, if you only had one eye, and it went wonky, you probably wouldn't survive long enough to mate.

Mind you, these criticisms are not to detract from the article; it was very well done. It just seems to me that evolution is not always taught correctly.

Evolution is not an active force, changing this and improving that. Evolution is passive; *life* is active. Those that are better at eluding predators, finding food, and so forth will survive and pass those superior traits to their offspring. Thus the process starts over again.

Mike Cruz
San Jose, CA

Although the intent of the "Dragon Ecology" articles is to provide ideas for the game rather than pretend to provide genuine scientific descriptions of the monsters, it's never a bad idea to understand the real-world terms used to describe their fantasy counterparts. Besides, getting it wrong provokes great letters!

Fleshing Out the Worlds

I would like to congratulate you on a fine publication. With the new format you have managed to rekindle the enthusiasm we felt back when the magazine was in double digits. With the spectacular artwork (both on the cover and within) and thought-provoking articles, you again inspire the imagination to follow along vistas of the fantastic.

I feel that the industry has again started to respect the gamers that keep it in business. Asking for our input and preferences makes us feel part of the creative process and allows us to take the game where we will. It is also laudable that you are promoting a strong sense of community. We need to feel that we are part of something greater, something that spans beyond our own gaming tables. We need to exchange views, laugh at ourselves, and exchange tales of the heroic. I implore you to keep strengthening the gaming community.

The magazine is full of useful articles both general and specific to game worlds. You've struck a good balance. The "Dungeon Mastery" and "Dungeoncraft" sections are excellent ideas! Keep supporting the newcomers. *KoDT* is the best I've seen since *Snarf Quest*.

The main issue I'm writing about, though, concerns "fleshing out" a campaign within the magazine. Let's take the GREYHAWK® setting as an example. We are all grateful that it was brought back, but I always found the development lacking in a few areas. I'd like to see products detailing areas other than the City of Greyhawk and its environs, as was done with the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting.

Many interesting areas are sold short. All they get is a few paragraphs of mention. We need to know more about these areas: their people, lore, traditions, ecology, etc. How much is known about Geoff? Bissel? What about an Arcane Age-like supplement for the Suel Imperium and the Bakluni state? You get my point.

Theodore Kabisios
Windsor, Ontario

While we don't have exactly *what you're describing on hand, we do have plenty of campaign-expanding articles on deck for the coming year. The GREYHAWK setting in particular will see some expansion both with game products and magazine articles.*

Issue #256 Review

Since you have made it so easy to write in my opinions and comments [via email], I just couldn't find any more reasons not to do so! Here are my opinions specifically on issue #256:

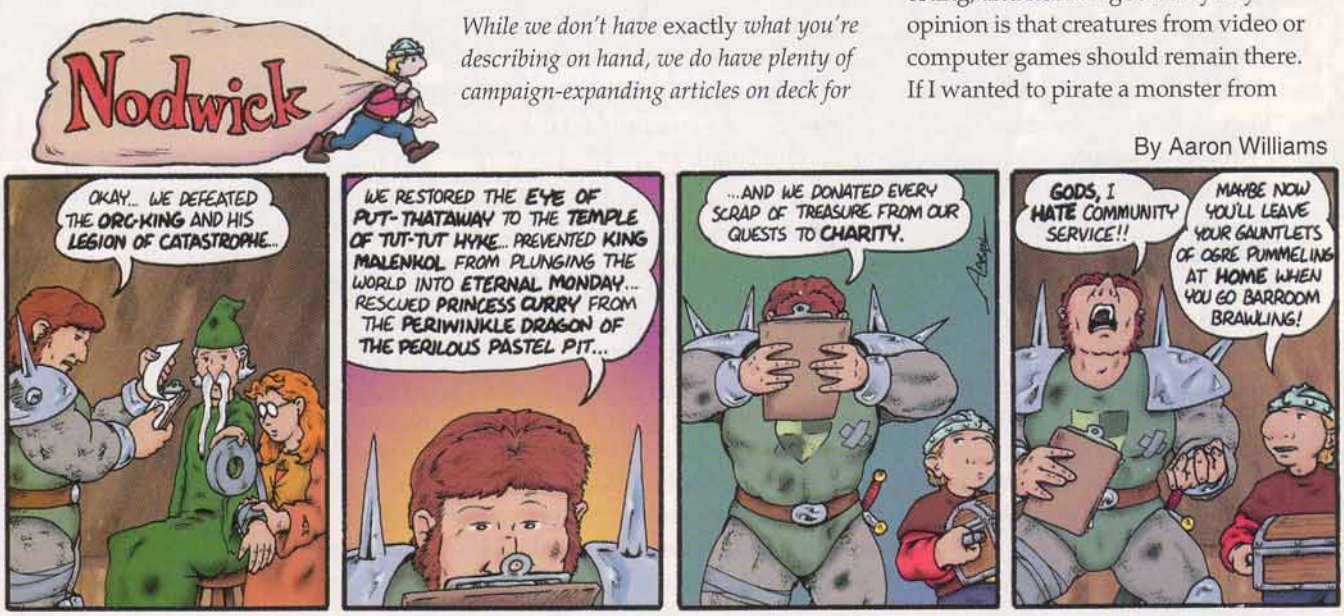
The "Dungeoncraft" column is great. So far, most of the ideas are pretty basic, but I wish these tips had been available when I was first starting my campaigns. The Second Rule of Dungeoncraft stated in that article ("Whenever you design a major piece of the campaign world, always devise at least one secret related to that piece.") will definitely help the consistency and continuity of my game world.

The "Hidden Agendas" article was likewise excellent. The format and concepts behind the secret societies make it easy for me to construct similar organizations in my game. I particularly like the icons associated with each society. I find it difficult to design such symbols myself.

I found little to recommend in the "Lost Giants of Krynn." The previous issue on giants had more useful articles.

Though many of the concepts are unique and interesting, I grow weary of "Wyrms of the North." "PC Portraits," on the other hand, is always a refreshing surprise. More, please.

"Creatures of Parthoris" was interesting, and not in a good way. My opinion is that creatures from video or computer games should remain there. If I wanted to pirate a monster from


Nodwick
By Aaron Williams
OKAY... WE DEFEATED THE ORC-KING AND HIS LEGION OF CATASTROPHE...
WE RESTORED THE EYE OF PUT-THATAWAY TO THE TEMPLE OF TUT-TUT HYKE... PREVENTED KING MALENKOL FROM PLUNGING THE WORLD INTO ETERNAL MONDAY... RESCUED PRINCESS CURRY FROM THE PERIWINKLE DRAGON OF THE PERILOUS PASTEL PIT...
...AND WE DONATED EVERY SCRAP OF TREASURE FROM OUR QUESTS TO CHARITY.
GODS, I HATE COMMUNITY SERVICE!!
MAYBE NOW YOU'LL LEAVE YOUR GAUNTLETS OF OGRE PUMMELING AT HOME WHEN YOU GO BARROOM BRAWLING!

one of my games, I could do it without the assistance of *Dragon Magazine*. I found the electronic artwork in this article unappealing.

"Arcane Lore" was interesting only because of the unusual focus of the article. Music has the power to stir up emotions and motivate people; it is not surprising that it would figure prominently in magic. Usually I skip right over "Arcane Lore."

I was exceptionally pleased to see the article on the weren, "Blood Philosophy." Not that I particularly love that race, but any Alternity® game material is useful to me. The history and culture I found only mildly interesting, but the new weapons and creature were very welcome. The article's artwork was spectacular. (Kudos to Stephen Daniele!) Although I found it amusing, I doubt if the primer on Pidgin Weren will ever be used.

Just my thoughts and opinions on one issue of *Dragon Magazine*. I've not yet found an issue that wasn't worth the cover price.

I would like to add a few thoughts on what I would like to see and not see in *Dragon Magazine*. (I can hardly complain if I don't tell you what I like, right?) First, any article on DM tips (like "Dungeoncraft") is useful. Campaign settings and design are very useful. Articles that present NPCs (like the "Rogues Gallery") are usually good. Articles on science fiction and Alternity are gobbled up like candy. I rejoiced to see the Ares™ section revived. Specifically, I would like to see Alternity articles for settings other than the Star*Drive setting. Does TSR have any plans for other game worlds under the Alternity banner? I saw an ad for *Tangents*, which I believe was a supplement not for the Star*Drive setting. I think it's high time Gamma World® was converted to the Alternity system.

What do I not want to see? New spells. My games, usually science fiction, have no use for new spells. Ever. There are still spells in the AD&D *Player's Handbook* that I don't know. I do not ever foresee a need for more spells. (I know I'm probably in the minority here.) Likewise, new creatures are of limited use. When I need a new creature in my game, I usually create it. I cannot think of a single instance where new creatures presented in your magazine found their way into my game.

My thanks for a useful and entertaining magazine.

John Shaw
Lowell, MA

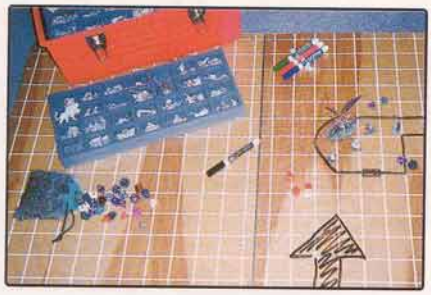
The Company of the Storm

It's nice to know there are some kindred spirits out there using miniatures to enhance game play. Although my AD&D group doesn't have the grand layout of Jeff Ibach's "ultimate gaming table" (described in issue #256), we do have some innovations of our own.

Our group refers to itself as "The Company of the Storm" partly because our first adventure revolved around an ancient keep that appeared only on stormy nights—and partly because the session was run during a power-outage in a raging thunderstorm. We get together only once a month, due to busy lifestyles, but when a game date is set, nothing can prevent "The Company" from grabbing dice and racing for their favorite spots around the miniatures board.

I'd always been fascinated with miniatures but didn't think I had the skill to paint them.

I'm a self-taught DM who's been hammering out adventures for over twenty years. A couple of years ago, I came across an article on painting miniatures in *Dragon Magazine*. I'd always been fascinated with miniatures but didn't think I had the skill to paint them. After reading the article, I was inspired to give it a try. I was waiting outside the local hobby shop when it opened the next morning. My plan was simple: Buy one miniature, a couple of inexpensive brushes, and just enough paint to accomplish the task. My selection was a three-pack of hellhounds.



Scott Stein's homemade miniatures board.

I was convinced before the figures were finished. Soon I was on the phone with Ral Partha, ordering all the little metal nasties for the next adventure I was planning.

For a playing surface, I covered the kitchen table with butcher paper and drew a grid of two-inch squares in pencil. I used colored markers to draw the various dungeon rooms. When the grid was full, I rolled out more paper and taped it down. This system worked well for a year, with the miniature collection growing to include figures for all the players' different characters. We lost valuable gaming time, however, changing the paper and drawing new grids to accommodate the growing dungeons. We needed a better, more permanent miniatures board.

The major consideration in designing a board was ensuring that it was portable, as our game sessions rotated among several locations. I spent a lot of time brainstorming the size and mechanics of the overall design. The end result is a 4'-square, hinged board. The plywood was reinforced with a wood border, stained, and striped for a grid of 2-inch squares. Cork pads on the bottom prevent the board from scratching other surfaces. Attached to the top, over the grid, is ⅛-inch Lucite. Dry-erase markers are used to draw out the dungeon rooms and make area notes where appropriate.

The miniatures are taken off a display shelf and transported to the game in a tackle box with foam tray inserts.

Eventually, I envision a gaming table similar to Jeff's, with all the trimmings.

Scott Stein
Avondale, AZ

Box Set Madness!

Great value for great products

DRAGONBALL Z

ENGLISH DUBBED
VHS Boxed Sets
(TV Series)

☐ $99.98 TV Episodes 1-25, 6 tapes, 535 min.

☐ $114.98 TV Episodes 26-53, 9 tapes, 585 min.

Goku and his friends fight powerful alien invaders to save the Earth! Seventeen volumes of the world famous Dragon Ball Z saga now available in two convenient Box Sets.

All Dragon Ball Z characters, names, logos and images
© 1997 BIRD STUDIO/SHUEISHA, TOEI ANIMATION
Licensed by FUNimation Productions, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

TENCHI Muyo!

OVA DVD Ultimate Edition THX Box Set
Episodes 1-13, 3 Discs, 420 min.

THX DVD VIDEO

☐ $119.98 Ultimate DVD Box Set (PIDA-1001V)

- 3 Discs: re-mastered and THX approved
- 3 languages (English 2.0, and Japanese 2.0 and Japanese 5.1)
- Premium plastic slipcase packaging; first 3,000 DVD's contain a limited edition 24k gold foil printed plaque
- Amazing Tenchi Encyclopedia Ver. 3.0

©1992-1999 AIC/PIONEER LDC, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

THE COMPLETE
BASTARD!!
VHS BOXED SET

Episodes 1-6, 3 tapes, 180 min.

☐ $59.98 English Dubbed (PIBX-0001D)

☐ $69.98 English Subtitled (PIBX-0001S)

"My obvious charms and god-like powers always dazzle the simple, ordinary folk!" – Dark Schneider. The ever humble Exploder Wizard, challenges his old army to prevent them from destroying the world, and, more importantly, because they threatened his girlfriend!

Bastard! © 1992, 1998 Kazushi Hagiwara • Shueisha

ALIEN DEFENDER
Geo-Armor
KISHIN CORPS

VHS Boxed Set
Episodes 1-7, 4 tapes, 240 min.

☐ $59.98 English Dubbed (PIBX-0007D)

☐ $59.98 English Subtitled (PIBX-0007S)

1941 – When the Axis joins forces with Alien invaders in a bid to conquer the world, only the valiant actions of an international band of heroes and their armored giants stand between humanity and the brink of oblivion!

©1992-1999 AIC/PIONEER LDC, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

TO USE THIS AD AS AN ORDER FORM, FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE STEPS:

1) Cut out or Copy this Ad
2) Fill out your info, check off which great box sets you want, and grab some money
3) Go to your favorite store
4) Show them your cash or credit card and give this form to them

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Notes: _____

CONSUMERS:

If you have any problems, try another store or call Pioneer Customer Service at 1-800-515-7655.

Check our our website at www.pioneeranimation.com

Retailers: If you have any problems obtaining this product from your regular distributors, please call Pioneer Entertainment Sales at 1-800-515-7655 x5084 or x5083.

Forum

Question of the Month

Respond to the Question of the Month or any other roleplaying topic by writing to "Forum," *DRAGON® Magazine*, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055, USA; dmail@wizards.com. Include your *full name and mailing address*; we won't print a letter sent anonymously. We'll withhold your name or print your full address if you wish.

What place does the basic dungeon crawl have in your AD&D® campaign?

Weak Characters

In response to the "Weenie Wizards" letter in issue #255, I'd like to ask another question: Has anyone noticed how fatally weak any poorly played PC is?

This is the true element behind the "Weenie Wizards" letter. It has nothing to do with overly fudgey DMing or too-common healing and *raise dead* spells, but everything to do with the simple fact that players are no longer satisfied by anything less than super PCs that can inflict hundreds of points of damage.

In examining why a Wizard is so slow to advance, one must first imagine the life of a Wizard. In play, Wizards are attempting to master forces unknown and inaccessible to the common person.

The Wizard class as it stands is still very powerful, even at 1st level.

The effort to learn this control is immense, so it takes large amounts of knowledge, time, and practice to advance within the magical arts. Anyone can pick up something and swing it as a weapon, but the mastery of magical arts takes the strongest of intellects and massive amounts of patience.

A Wizard's low hit points (d4) also reflect this dedication to matters of the mind rather than the body. A competent Wizard is not intentionally going to place himself in the path of a descending blade, for this is not the road that they have chosen in life. They do not harden their bodies to absorb blows but instead look for spells to do it for them. As for low money, think of the cost of a spellbook and the purchasing price for one 1st-level spell. Take a spellbook with twenty pages (20 × 50 gp per page) and a leather cover (anywhere from 10–100 gp) and add one *charm person* spell. According to the *DMG*, the average cost for an NPC to cast *charm person* is 1,000 gold pieces. So for one casting of the spell, the Wizard has spent about 2,050 gp and still has it for use as long as the Wizard has the book. It's difficult to imagine a Wizard with only one starting spell in his or her spellbook; the *DMG* states that a typical Wizard starts with at least *read magic*, *detect magic*, and four other spells. Calculating all of that, having a spellbook gives a PC Wizard more wealth than all of the other typical PCs combined!

On to weapons, armor, and THAC0: Starting Wizards with any sense do not get into fights. Their weapons are nothing more than a last line of defense in case their spells and genius fail. Armor is bulky and restrictive, and it interferes with spells. Wizards' THAC0 scores reflect their complete ignorance in the ways of physical combat. All of these things are clearly outlined in both the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* and *Player's Handbook*. And most of all, beyond those rules, it just makes sense.

I have played five or six 1st-level Wizards in my meager seven years of playing, and half of them have died.

Why? Not because they were bad at being Wizards; I was just bad at playing them. My Wizards would rush in with fiery attacks, run out of spells, then die trying to scurry away. But then I got smart. Why send Charley the Necromancer rushing forward to cast that *chill touch* spell when an *undead servant* can fight for him while he keeps his rear out of the fray. The key element to playing *any* character is first realizing that each class has its strengths and weaknesses, then utilizing them.

Some DMs have found ways to overcome the limits of low-level Wizards. Bonus spells for high Intelligence scores, like those Priests receive for high Wisdom scores, might be one solution. Or the ability to rememorize spells in a day, each time with checks made to see whether it is possible, and appropriate consequences for failure. However, in doing these things, a DM must be extremely careful not to upset game balance, thus making play undesirable for non-Wizard players. If Wizards are allowed to advance too quickly and cast too many spells, they soon rise to overly powerful positions, both overriding the need for other classes and making magic no longer an arcane, secretive power but an all-too-common, and ultimately uninteresting, aspect of any campaign.

There is no need for changes in the Wizard class for a 3rd-Edition AD&D® game, just changes in the hack-and-slash attitudes that are growing in the role-playing community.

Jesse Mix
Bemidji, MN

Templates v3.0

I'm afraid that my letter in issue #252 might have caused some confusion. This was because, in the interest of brevity, I merely addressed in general the changes that I would make for a 3rd Edition

game and did not describe specifics. Thus, this letter is in response to Justin Bacon's letter in issue #254 and to clarify a few points.

What I called a "class-level" system is more like a template system than the true class-level system of the AD&D game. I had implemented several of the same characteristics of a template that Mr. Bacon advocated in his letter. And though "class-level" might be a misnomer, it is nevertheless the basis from which my changes are derived. My idea of a 3rd Edition is not an entirely new system built from scratch but rather a major overhaul of 2nd Edition, providing more flexibility while maintaining the look and feel of the classic AD&D game.

Let us look at my ideas and Mr. Bacon's more closely: Mr. Bacon suggested that all class skills, proficiencies, and any other skill-like abilities be unified. I advised changing all skills to proficiencies. The result is the same. I merely wished to maintain the identity of some of the AD&D game's features.

His later points include fleshing out the relationship between skills and levels, though not very clearly. Obviously, the skills can be advanced individually. Just because I advocate a level system does not mean that all skills advance together. As I wrote in my previous letter, experience levels are used to describe advancement not by class but by race. The purpose (and beauty) of using levels is that one can immediately make a judgment about a character's experience and toughness and compare it with other characters and monsters.

Skills should be grouped into well-defined categories, and a character's access to these skills should be determined by his race (or culture), social class, and ability scores. Templates such as those used in *Skills & Powers* do not sufficiently expand the game to be used as the basis of a 3rd Edition. That system allows a player to choose a class with its attendant abilities and to build upon that.

I feel that, instead, templates should be used as guidelines for designing a character. A Paladin template would provide suggestions for skills (proficiencies) to be chosen at each level, but no hard-and-fast rule; after all, just because a character is a Paladin does not mean that he has to be just like every other Paladin. The use of templates in this fashion eliminates the need for both classes and kits by creating a classification that encompasses both. No more having a character of the Warrior group, Ranger class, and Stalker kit. After all, aren't Paladins and Rangers simply Fighters in disguise?

In addition, such templates provide a useful feature: backward compatibility (to extend Mr. Bacon's computer metaphor). Just as those brand-new PCs with DVD drives can play CDs as well, spanking new PCs (player characters) can be created using 2nd-Edition rules (by treating each template as a class) or 3rd-Edition rules by using the templates only as guidelines. Thus, he has the option of using either system without conflict, saving time and effort.

I would truly like to discuss this topic in more detail and receive responses more quickly than I can over "Forum," so please respond by email.

Leon Chang
gallain@hotmail.com

Back to the Basics

With each new issue of *DRAGON® Magazine*, I feel more and more dread. Every issue over the last few months has contained letters devoted to the virtues and drawbacks of Wizards of the Coast creating a 3rd Edition of the AD&D game. Many people think that the class-level system should go; others claim that it should stay. Some advocate revising the combat system, the magic system, or whatever else they don't like.

That's the right of every gamer who plays this great system. As Justin Bacon pointed out in issue #254, the AD&D system is old, the oldest official RPG in fact. It was the first class-level system (as far as I know) and, like everything in life, it isn't perfect. But it deals with fantasy, and as such, cannot precisely detail and predict the outcome of every action a PC or NPC takes. As the oldest system, it's been playtested more than any other in the world. The people who created the game aren't the only ones playtesting it; we all are. Over the years every player and DM has created house rules that work for their games, or found a rule that was inconsistent and had it fixed. Through *DRAGON Magazine* we can air the fruits of our labors, sharing our opinions and unofficial rules that we've playtested and put on display for the community to see and try.

A 3rd Edition will happen sooner or later, as all things are improved upon, especially in our RPG. If changes are to occur, the core of the system should remain largely unchanged. Here is my humble opinion of what the 3rd Edition should encompass:

fter all, aren't Paladins and Rangers simply Fighters in disguise?

Ability Scores: Keep the six basic scores, but dump the sub-abilities from *Skills & Powers* and get rid of exceptional Strength.

Class-Level System: Changing this to a skill-based system is absurd. The class-level system is AD&D. My personal choice is to go back to the Basic D&D® way, making each race a class of its own.

Alignment: Make this optional or revert to a Lawful-Neutral-Chaotic system only (as in the D&D game).

Proficiencies: The "Back in the Saddle" article (from issue #225) is what we use in our games now. A PC should have to work at his skills to improve them, not just start with 18s because he has an 18 in the related ability score.

Experience: For combat experience, return to the 1st-Edition experience points for monsters. It gave bonus XPs for each hit point the creature had, so monsters with more hit points were worth more than weaker ones. The XP awards by class in the 2nd Edition rules should be expanded and fixed. Should someone receive 200 XP for successfully making a Thief skill roll? No way!

Level Limits: Lower these to their original levels, but keep the Slow Advancement and Bonus Levels from high ability scores rules.

Magic: This is a biggie, but I'd keep the core system intact. Give Mages with high Intelligence scores the same bonus spells that Priests receive for high Wisdom scores.

Combat: The current system is solid but clunky. Our group uses a continuous system I found on the web and tinkered with. It doesn't use rounds, but it has been smoother and keeps every player at the table when a long combat is going on.

Jim Bobb
EzJ25@aol.com
Jacobus, PA

Favorite Weapons

M. Kant's letter in issue #248 needs rebuttal, as it is filled with personal opinion rather than fact.

The writer states that an ax is "relatively easy to use." Compared to what? The striking edge of the ax is much smaller than that of a sword, and the ax delivers more kinetic energy than a sword. This comparatively narrow edge leaves much room for mishap, glancing blows, and just plain misses. The comment that "you don't have to know anything about an ax to use it well" is naive at best. Too many people end up in hospitals after saying that very same thing and then trying to chop firewood.

Swords, on the other hand, come in a variety of types, built for specific purposes or general combat purposes. The use of a hack-and-slash broadsword is just as easy if not easier to learn than an ax. Becoming proficient is another thing altogether. Fencing and the use of rapier, saber-rapier, or epee has a much higher learning curve.

The English longbow was not the "deadliest weapon of the time." Its use made it so, but a crossbow (aided by a cranequin) could reach 300 pounds in draw versus a longbow's 150 to 175 pounds. Thus, the crossbow was more powerful than the longbow upon release of its projectile.

Maces and morning stars were not the pieces of junk the writer made them out to be. They were used very effectively to crush and buckle plate (and anything else they hit), and they kill by traumatic stress.

I do agree with Kant's opinion that players expand their usage of other weapons. The root of being stuck in the longbow/longsword rut is the AD&D system itself, which allocates favoritism to these weapons (at least in the 1st Edition). My suggestion for an article is one of equalizing some weapons and giving bonuses to others when used against specific types of armor.

Allen Mixson
Alpine, CA

Spoiling Spell Points

After reading Ian Mathers's letter in Issue #256, I felt it was time to throw in my two-cents' worth regarding the spell memorization debate. I have a few problems with giving Wizards a point system like that of the Psionicist (from *The Complete Psionics Handbook*).

I think Mages are powerful enough at high levels, and a spell-point system makes high-level Mages more powerful while doing little to help the 1st- through 3rd-level Mages who really need it. I'm working on the assumption that any spell-point system works on some sort of conversion of the current table of spells per level to blanket points.

The English longbow was not the "deadliest weapon of the time."

I like the idea of giving Priests the ability to pray for their spells at the time of casting, as a benefit of the granted nature of their abilities. Giving Wizards this same basic ability removes one of the most important balances against a Wizard's power.

A spell-point system allows Mages to use the points from their lower-level spells to fuel more high-level spells than they can cast with the current system. Also, it crushes any semblance of originality in spellcasting, as you can use all of your spell points on *fireballs*, ignoring 2nd- and 4th-level spells.

Having bonus spell points based on Intelligence just rewards Wizards even more for their prime requisite. Additional points from Constitution smacks of PSPs and blurs the difference between how psionics and magic work. So does any system that restores spell-points based upon hours of rest.

I understand how arbitrary the current system for Mages seems, but in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting they have provided an explanation for it.

That explanation, however, still leaves the rules as they are, and my group has experimented with an alternate system.

First, I use the Cantrip NWP from *DRAGON Magazine*, which gives Wizards a little more magical power at 1st level if the player decides to take it.

Then, instead of having to memorize a specific spell for each available slot, each available slot allows the Wizard to study one of the spells of that level from his books. Then, he can cast the allotted number of spells for each level in whatever combination he wishes. To get around the problem of a 1st-level Mage having only one spell slot (and thus a single choice), the Mage can study one additional spell per level. This may sound confusing, so let me give an example. A 7th-level Mage has access to 4/3/2/1 spells in the current system. In my system, he could study 5 spells of 1st level, 4 of 2nd, 3 of 3rd, and 2 of 4th. He could still only cast 4/3/2/1 spells each day, but he could cast any combination of his memorized spells within each level. Thus, if he studied *fireball*, *fly*, and *dispel magic* as his 3rd-level spells for the day, he could cast one of each, two *fireballs* and a *dispel magic*, or even three *fly* spells if the situation so demanded. The memorization times remain the same, so a Mage strapped for time can limit his selection of spells for the day but still cast a full complement.

This system is much less advantageous to Wizards than most spell-point systems, but it gives them more latitude than the current memorization system.

Michael P. Kellam
San Antonio, TX

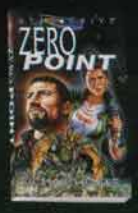
The Monthly Question

I believe 8th- and 9th-level spells for Priests would take away from the class's roleplaying abilities and make the Priest much more powerful than the Wizard. The Priest already has more hit points

Good thing you enhanced your Dex skills back at ExoSoft—that hostile ship nearly fried you through your softsuit. And the autoflechette you nabbed off the weren corpse will come in handy when you find out Ewan seduced your pilot.

STAR*DRIVE®

Campaign Setting



Zero Point
Star*Drive® novel
Richard Baker
Available June

Peter Sokolov is a bounty hunter and cybernetic killer for hire, suddenly caught in a deadly struggle for supremacy in the black abyss between the stars. Richard Baker, one of the creators of the **Star*Drive** universe, reveals the darker side of the Verge.

Klick Clack
Star*Drive adventure
Available May

Jump feet-first into this classic alien bug hunt and meet the klicks—an insectoid alien species at war with humans and their allies in the Verge. A unique asteroid-mapping function provides an unlimited variety of klick bases, making this adventure a killer hunt over and over again.

ALTERNITY®

Science Fiction Roleplaying Game

Find yourself. Somewhere else.

Questions? Call 800•324•6496
Visit our website at <www.tsr.com>

SILVER ANNIVERSARY

and better combat abilities; increasing the number of spells a Priest can learn and allowing the powers of the spells to increase makes the Priest as powerful as the Wizard in matters of magic.

Currently, there is no need for the Priest to learn any higher magics than 7th level. In many campaigns, as an option to high-level characters, both Wizards and Priests are capable of using powerful magics unrelated to their spells. For instance, in my campaign, Priests and Clerics who have learned all of the 7th-level spells their Immortal is willing to give them may gain further powers or powerful artifacts. This makes Priests more than just Wizards who appeal to Immortals for spells.

Daniel Bates
Flower Mound, TX

Wizards can also look weak because, unlike other classes, the Wizards' damage-dealing abilities are not tightly linked to their attributes, and in a "high powered" party (one in which combat characters have an average Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution above 16) they can indeed start to look ropy as their abilities do not allow them to compete. Try using spells that direct opponents' strength against them, like *fire shield* and *charm*.

Finally, the DM should remember that magical treasure for Fighters and their ilk should be balanced with items for Wizards. Wands, staves, and scrolls can be scarce sometimes.

I have played in campaigns where the most powerful party member was the Wizard, due to the strength of the character and dynamism of the player. I reject out of hand the assertion that Wizards are underpowered. Weak, yes; weenies, no.

John Wade
Yorkshire, England

One should not forget that the AD&D game is a team endeavor; characters of all classes are needed in a party prepared to deal with all eventualities.

Play Your Position

Having read Dennis Roses' letter in issue #255, I feel moved to reply. While his technical points are true enough, one should not forget that the AD&D game is a team endeavor; characters of all classes are needed in a party prepared to deal with all eventualities. Wizards aren't meant to go toe to toe with villains, and if his DM is making him do that to gain experience, then he's missing the point. To say that a Wizard is a weak combatant is an understatement: He isn't a combatant at all. It isn't his job. It's like saying, "This quarterback guy is a bit of a wimp. All the guys on the special team are bigger than he is. Let's get rid of him."

If—as happens with some novice DMs—the monsters are "shared out" among the players so that one (or more) attacks each character, invest in a battle mat and some figures, and show the DM how your Fighters form up to protect the Wizard and allow him to cast his spells. Buy the DM *Combat & Tactics* for his birthday.

A Question of Character

I read Kev Smith's and Dennis Rose's letters to "Forum" in issue #255 with some chagrin. This mathematical analysis of classes seems to crop up again and again in these pages, with well-reasoned letters usually completely contradicting one another. It seems to me to be missing the point. If I were to play, for example, a Wizard, I wouldn't do it for the level advancement or the hit points or the power. I'd do it because I wanted to play a Wizard character. The ephemeral "game balance" is, in my opinion, somewhat over-rated.

Let's take an example in popular culture—the TV series *Due South*. Ray, the Chicago cop from that series, is not as strong, charismatic, perceptive, or knowledgeable as Fraser the Mountie. However, he's still a worthwhile and valuable character. His talents, though seemingly less than Fraser's, are valuable, and his personality provides part of the stories' dynamics.

Roleplaying games work in a similar way: Power is irrelevant as long as you have an interesting character. If you find that a certain class's powers aren't what you want, then take the hint your brain is giving you—don't play that class! Leave it for someone who will play it.

Tom McGrenery
Bedfordshire, England

Another's View

This morning I bought issue #256, and as usual, I started with the "Forum" section. Why? Because I find it interesting to read about what is on the mind of other AD&D players (both DMs and players). Even if I do not agree with a letter, it helps me to think and form my own opinion. I certainly don't like all the letters I read or comments I hear. As a matter of fact, many times I felt the urge to write a letter stating my opinion on one thing or an other.

This time my attention was caught by the last letter of "Forum" by Joseph A. Hoffmann. He complained that some of the other letters overwhelmed him with ignorance. He accused people of complaining on facts, rules, and articles. According to Mr. Hoffmann, these are only excuses to hide the DM's inability to control the game. Might it not also be true that these players are looking for a house rule to remove what they see as an error? His game might be perfect, but mine is not. In short, every DM out there might have a unique style and rules, but sometimes people benefit from learning about another's style.

By the way, my players enjoyed a session in which their characters were hunted by gargoyles even though they did not have any magical weapons. There was no way to destroy the gargoyles; the fun was in avoiding them while searching for treasure.

Pieter Sleijpen
Houten, The Netherlands

The ultimate English-language guide to the world's most popular Magical Girl Japanese anime series -- Sailor Moon! Features an easy-to-learn role-playing game, a comprehensive Sailor Moon resource and much more!

Product #03-001 • ISBN 0-9682431-1-8
208 pages • $24.95 US/$34.95 CAN.

WWW.GUARDIANSORDER.ON.CA

WWW.GAMECODEX.COM

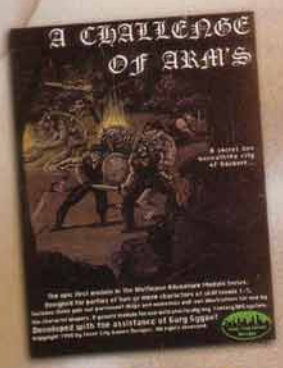
The Game Guild

Specializing in hard-to-find and out-of-print TSR products

Overseas and domistic mail order

1-888-56-GAMES

WWW.MAG7.COM/GAMEGLD.HTM



A CHALLENGE OF ARMS

The first in the new Wolfmoon Adventure Module series of generic fantasy modules being produced with Gary Gygax. A dark secret lies beneath the streets of Hauberk, and you must uncover it while there's still time. An 80 page module packed with maps, illustrations, and a GM screen for use with almost any rpg system. Retail: $14.95

ICGD.GAMEVERSE.ORG

RPGnet

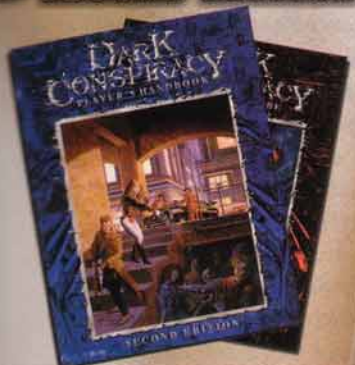
The Inside Scoop on Gaming

RPGnet is the only industry-focused independent role-playing site. We support the free RPG community, and work to bring you the inside scoop on gaming every week!

WWW.RPG.NET

WWW.EDENSTUDIOS.NET

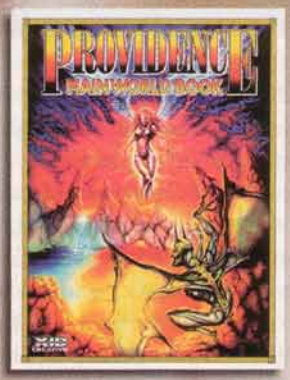
DARK CONSPIRACY
SECOND EDITION



ARE YOU GAME?

Dynasty Presentations, Inc.
PO BOX 481 • Lake Geneva, WI 53147

WWW.DYNASTYPRESENTATIONS.COM



PROVIDENCE

The world of Providence is a place of high fantasy where the Arthurian legacy of grand chivalry is mixed, like a potent elixir, with the steel of super-heroes. Come and learn to be a hero again.

WWW.IDCREATIVE.COM

MADHOUSE

Your Global PBM Conspiracy

Prepair yourself for a new way to game!

- Fantasy
- Sci-Fi
- Conspiracy
- And Much More!

Our play-by-mail games will rock your world. For a FREE information package, write or visit our website.

In North America:
PO BOX 5519, ROUND ROCK, TX 78683-5519, USA
In Europe:
13 MARCHMONT GREEN, HERTS HP2 5BB, UK

WWW.PLAY-BY-MAIL.COM

Dungeoncraft

Need Help?
Send your questions and anecdotes about running AD&D® game adventures to:

"Dungeoncraft"
℅ *DRAGON® Magazine*
1801 Lind Avenue S.W.
Renton, WA 98055

Send email to
dmail@wizards.com

By Ray Winninger

Whew! If you're still with me after those last three installments, give yourself a little pat on the back. You're halfway to holding your first game session, and a nice big chunk of the hard work is behind you. You should now have a good idea of where your campaign is heading. This month's task, although it requires imagination, isn't as labor intensive as the earlier steps.

Believe it or not, one of the most difficult tasks you face as Dungeon Master is dreaming up cool names for all those places, gods, monsters, and NPCs you create. As superficial as this chore might seem, nothing kills interest in an AD&D® game faster than goofy names. The minute your players are attacked by Gargathrank the Unclean, a great deal of the credibility you've carefully fostered flies straight out the window. Don't forget that the players' first impressions of your game world are based, in part, on the names you choose.

Nothing kills interest in an AD&D game faster than goofy names.

Here are a few simple techniques to help you choose the right names easily.

1. Never append adjectives to your character names.

I've listed this suggestion first for a reason. Garrok the Bold, Dobbin the Swift, and Peebold the Wise all sound silly and immediately call to mind "Knights of the Dinner Table" strips. Maybe, somewhere, someone once invented an adjective name that sounded as cool as it was supposed to sound, but—in twenty years of gaming—I've never heard it. The easiest way to avoid cluttering your game with silly adjective names is to rule out the adjectives altogether.

If a player chooses an otherwise okay name with an appended adjective, most of the people he meets in your game world should simply refuse to address him by his self-proclaimed title until the player finally takes the hint and drops the silly thing. It's likely that many NPCs will form a bad impression of such a character. After all, there's something presumptuous and downright arrogant about a young whipper snapper of an adventurer wandering around calling himself "the Strong," "the Brave," or (especially) the "All-Powerful." If the player persists, a little bit of mockery from NPCs or increasingly difficult challenges to prove his right to bear the title should put him in his place. "So you're Gabel the Tough, eh? Well why don't you show me how tough you are!"

One workable alternative to appending an adjective to your names is appending a noun instead as a sort of surname. Thorvin Backbiter is not a bad name for a Thief, so long as Thorvin is one of those guys who doesn't mind walking around with a name that immediately says, "Hey! I'm a Thief!" If you go this route, aim for an interesting, non-standard noun—"backbiter" instead of "backstabber," "spellshaper" instead of "magic-user," etc.

2. Borrow an existing language.

Remember this number: 400. That's the Dewey Decimal classification number for language. If you go to your local public library and browse around the 430s through about the 490s, you'll find plenty of foreign-language dictionaries, each of which can be mined for good names. Flipping open just about any foreign-language dictionary to a random page should either provide you with a number of usable names or at least a nice collections of syllables that you can re-arrange to form usable names. The advantage of this approach is that the names it generates don't sound like a clunky collection of sounds, since words in most languages naturally evolve to please the ear.

In fact, it's not a bad idea to fix on one particular language and use it to generate the names of all the places and NPCs in one region of your game world. That way, you'll establish a continuity and make your names sound like they were derived from a single, common tongue (because, in fact, they were). Later, you

can select other real-world languages to use as the naming blueprints for other regions in your campaign, giving each locale its own individual "feel."

Note that this approach is particularly recommended if you selected a cultural hook for your game world (as described in *DRAGON® Magazine* issue #256). If you're building a Viking world, find a Norwegian dictionary. If your world is based on ancient Roman culture, find a Latin dictionary.

3. Don't be afraid to use English names.

For some reason, many people presume that AD&D character and place names should consist of random, nonsensical syllables. What's wrong with good, old-fashioned English names? What sounds better to you—The Knights of Gligathrax, or the Knights of the Blood Throne? Similarly, Jason, Elaine, and Thomas are all perfectly good character names.

You can also form interesting names by combining a couple of descriptive English words. Tanglewood is not a bad name for a dense, scary forest. A town that lies along a river and was once the site of an important battle might be known as Bloodwater. The local pixie king might be named Skitterfeet. The idea here is to select interesting words and avoid cliches. You can probably do better than Orcsmasher, Bigtown, and Meatrender.

Remember that the names you choose tell your players a lot about your game world. Sticking to English names tends to reinforce a medieval (almost Arthurian) atmosphere. If that's what you're aiming for, then this is probably the naming strategy for you.

4. Mercilessly rip off good names.

This is the age of the super-sized bookstore. Just about every community in America boasts at least one Barnes and Noble, Borders, SuperCrown, or other mammoth bookseller. Typically, these bookstores feature two or three enormous shelves stuffed with science fiction and fantasy paperbacks. Every book on those shelves is likely to contain at least a handful of usable names. A bit of idle flipping through these books is bound to turn up some workable concepts. Similarly, a quick glance through a detailed world atlas or two is likely to conjure a few usable place names. Get in the habit of bringing a notebook along when you go shopping and jot down anything that strikes your fancy. When swiping names, though, never use the names of well-known characters no matter how cool they sound. Naming shopkeepers and town guardsmen Conan or Gandalf not only confuses your players, it usually sounds just as silly as a "random syllable" or "appended adjective" name.

5. When all else fails, turn to the local phone book.

If you don't have immediate access to a foreign language dictionary or a Barnes and Noble, you can often glean useful names from your local phone book. Open to a random page and take a look at the surnames. To illustrate, I've just opened the Seattle Metro White Pages to page 401. Glancing through the columns, I can see a couple of usable character names (Finzer, Fiori, Fiscus) and a couple of decent place names (Firnburg and Firth). Obviously, those in large cities can employ this tactic to greater effect than can rural dwellers.

One of the very best secret resources for Dungeon Masters is your local bookseller's children's section.

One of the very best secret resources for Dungeon Masters is your local bookseller's children's section. Not only are the children's books stuffed full of great names, they often contain useful, imaginative ideas for entire adventures. In the past, children's books have inspired me to design adventures that take place in giant trees, in the belly of an enormous sea creature, and other unusual and imaginative locales.

One last point to make about swiping names from other sources: If you need a great name for an elf, dwarf, halfling, or other demihuman, consider going directly to J.R.R. Tolkien, unless you have a compelling reason not to do so. Not only did the good Professor derive his names for these creatures from complex invented languages he derived from real ones (thus lending the names that same sense of continuity mentioned in rule number two), just about every Dungeon Master who has preceded you ripped off his elf and dwarf names from Tolkien. Thus, Tolkienesque elf and dwarf names sound "correct" to many AD&D players.

This isn't to say that you should take your names directly from Tolkien's works—often, your best bet is to pull a few syllables from a collection of three or four names and rearrange them to form a new name.

6. Work with the players to name their characters.

All the hard work that you put into keeping silly names out of your game world can be destroyed by a couple of unimaginative players. It seems that every group has at least one or two jokers who want to name their characters Soupy, Bullwinkle, or even... (shudder)...Kramer. Usually, these folks are just trying to be funny, but sometimes they're just terribly unimaginative. In any case, you should be aware that as minor as this issue sounds, such names can wreak havoc on your campaign. The first time a particularly fun and dramatic moment arises and you must address one of your players as Bullwinkle, you'll see what I mean. Don't be afraid to rule out any names that have the potential to trample the tone of your campaign. If your players are having difficulty inventing usable names, try suggesting some of the techniques outlined in this column. You might even suggest some names yourself.

In any case, you don't want to go overboard. In the end, the players should have the right to select their own names, just so long as they don't select something unworkable.

With these strategies in mind, I've attached a few names to some of the

Dear Dungeoncraft

I started a new AD&D campaign three weeks ago, and I've already run into a major snag. A couple of my players seem to have the entire *Monstrous Manual*™ book memorized from cover to cover! Every time the adventurers stumble across a monster, these jokers start rattling off its statistics, strengths, and weaknesses to the rest of the group. I've tried to point out that there's no way their characters would know any of this information since they (the characters) have never encountered the creatures before, but once a battle starts these guys can't seem to control themselves. Help!

—Distraught in Denver

This is definitely a problem, Distraught. A lot of the fun of battling creatures like mummies and elementals comes from figuring out the creatures' weaknesses for yourself. The sort of players you describe take surprise and a sense of discovery—and thus a great deal of the fun—out of the game.

I realize that your problem runs deeper than this, but right off the bat it's worth mentioning that the Dungeon Master should prohibit the players from consulting the Dungeon Master® Guide *or the* Monstrous Manual *book during play. These works are intended for the DM only. While it's OK for the players to consult such books between play sessions, looking up monster statistics or magical item descriptions during play isn't fair, and it isn't fun. As you point out, none of the players' characters would have access to this information.*

What do you do when the players have memorized large portions of these books? First off, don't refer to monsters or magical items by name the first time the players encounter them. Instead, describe the monster or item: "You see a brown, rubbery mass slinking out of the shadows and waving what appear to be tentacles," not "You see an otyugh." This gives the memorizers pause; before they can start acting on their inside information, they must first figure out exactly what they are facing. You might even permanently rename some of the monsters to confuse things further. It might take the memorizers a long time to realize that the "skulkers" they've been fighting are nothing but otyughs in disguise.

You should also feel free to make instant, on-the-spot alterations to a monster or item. Alter the monster's armor class, change a bag of holding *into a* box of holding, *or change the monster's specific weaknesses a tad. (Maybe the mummies on your world suffer damage only from magical fire.) After a few of these alterations, the players should quickly learn the lesson that they can't necessarily trust their memories of the* Monstrous Manual *book. If you do make such changes, though, remember to apply them consistently. The next time the players encounter mummies, for instance, the monsters should still be harmed only by magical fire (unless there is an explicit reason why these mummies should be different from the mummies the players encountered earlier). Part of the players' reward for successfully vanquishing a monster should be a better understanding of its secrets so they can be better prepared to fight the thing the next time. Get into the habit of lightly marking your alterations in the appropriate entries of the* Dungeon Master Guide *and the* Monstrous Manual *in pencil.*

places and concepts in my own campaign. Since I want to reinforce a sort of "Robin Hood" atmosphere to go along with the general concept of a forest world, I'm going to try to stick to English names as much as possible.

From Issue #256:

Stronghold, base of operations: Ironoak.

Woods surrounding the stronghold, secretly dominated by treants: Tanglewood.

Woods dominated by orc tribes that lie beyond the border protected by Ironoak: The Black Wood. (This is where the warden's title comes from.)

Warden of the Black Wood: Richard. (For characters, I'd like to go with a combination of appropriate real world names and more traditional fantasy names—the same approach George Lucas chose in *Star Wars*.)

Feudal monarchy that maintains the stronghold: Umbria. (The name of an actual geographical location in Great Britain.)

From Issue #257:

Nature goddess, also doubles as the name of the planet: Aris. (A homonym of Eris, the ancient Greek goddess of discord; I merely liked the way the name sounded and reworked it for my own purposes.)

The moon: Selene. (The name of the ancient Greek goddess of the moon; I'm hoping this name resonates with the players and reminds them of the moon every time they hear it.)

The evil religious order: Simply, the Legion.

The good order: The Children of Aris, or simply "the Children." Priests of the order often place the title "Childe" before their names.

The druidic order: Why not call them "Druids"?

Now that you've attached names to some of the most important people, places, and concepts in your campaign world, it's time to perform an important task that will prepare you for some of the work ahead. If you've been following the Second Rule of Dungeoncraft, each time you invented a significant detail about your world, you created a secret related to that detail. It's now time to write each of those secrets on a three-by-five index card for future reference. Later we will use this "deck of secrets" to help us flesh out the campaign area and design adventures.

That should do it for now. Join me next month, when I'll look at designing the campaign's base of operations.

Ray Winninger ran his first AD&D campaign nineteen years ago. It lasted two weeks. Since then, Ray's written more than fifty rulebooks, game accessories, supplements, and adventures.

MINOTAURS AND . . .

Reavers of the Blood Sea
Richard A. Knaak
The Chaos War Series
Available May

The minotaur pirates of the Blood Sea face a terrible choice as the world around them crumbles during the summer of Chaos.

CENTAURS AND . . .

Dezra's Quest
Chris Pierson
Bridges of Time Series
Available June

During Krynn's Second Cataclysm a centaur chieftain makes a terrible pact with Chaos. Ten years later, smarting from the consequences of that pact, a lone centaur seeks help from Caramon, the aging Hero of the Lance.

. . . DRACONIANS, OH MY.

Heroes and Fools: Tales of the Fifth Age
Edited by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman
A **Dragonlance**® Anthology
Available July

Margaret Weis and Don Perrin tell the adventures of Kang and his corps of draconian engineers—just one of the exciting short stories in this anthology of prominent **Dragonlance** authors.

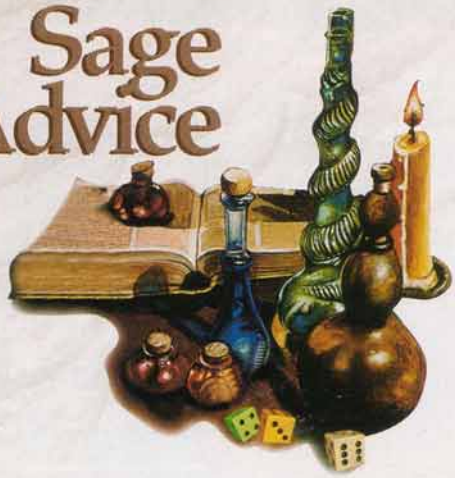
DRAGONLANCE®

Questions? Call (800) 324-6496
Visit our website at **www.tsr.com**

SILVER ANNIVERSARY TSR

Dragonlance, TSR, and related logos are registered trademarks of TSR, Inc. TSR, Inc. is a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©1999 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Sage Advice



By Skip Williams

Need Some Help With Your Game?

In the U.S.:
"Sage Advice," DRAGON Magazine,
1801 Lind Avenue S.W.,
Renton, WA 98055.

In Europe:
"Sage Advice," DRAGON Magazine,
Wizards of the Coast, Belgium
P.O. Box 2031, 2600 Berchem, Belgium
+32-70-23-32-88

In the U.K.:
"Sage Advice," DRAGON Magazine
Wizards of the Coast, P.O. Box 61
Maidenhead, Berkshire SL61FX

thesage@wizards.com

The Sage cannot make personal replies; please include no SASE with your questions.

This month, the Sage examines a variety of optional rules for the AD&D® game and explores a few seldom visited corners of the core rules.

My group has been having a discussion over whether the use of poison is an evil act. The situation is that a Chaotic Good Thief has gotten his hands on a vial of Type E poison and wants to use it. The majority of the group believes that the situation in which the poison is used is what determines good or evil. If we are fighting a fire drake, then using poison against the drake is OK. However, if the Thief uses poison against Joe Blow the Fighter, then this could be an evil act depending on Joe's alignment. As for myself, I think the situation is the determining factor, but I also think good characters should use poison only as a last resort. The DM of this group is unsure but basically believes the use of any poison is an evil act. I know the DM is always right, but can you give your two cents' worth?

My group has been having a discussion over whether the use of poison is an evil act.

Your DM is right to look askance at characters who use poison—not because poison is inherently evil (poison has no alignment at all) but because poison's ability to deliver quick death can get out of hand in a real hurry. As for my "two cents' worth," take a look at the biographical note at the end of this column in issue #247. The note relates the story of how one of my characters, a Lawful Good Ranger, happened to use poison once. In this case, the Ranger was trying to scrub some contact poison off an *ioun stone* when a dragon attacked him. In a fit of pique, the Ranger tossed the poisoned stone down the dragon's gullet and killed it. No one present (and the group included D&D® co-creator E. Gary Gygax) thought that was an evil act.

On the other hand, the Ranger really didn't plan to use the poison as a weapon; it just happened that way. Combat in the AD&D game generally—at least for Warriors—follows the chivalric ideal. Opponents look each other in the eye (conditions permitting) as they face off and strive to outmaneuver (or outlast) one another in a true measure of fighting prowess. Poison, which can make even a minor cut deadly, makes the affair decidedly less heroic. Since the PC in question is a Thief, the character probably isn't pushing the envelope too much by carrying around some discovered poison. For someone like a Paladin, however, destroying the stuff pronto would be the honorable and responsible thing to do; doing so means the Paladin will not be tempted to use it improperly, and there's no chance that the stuff will be lost or stolen and subsequently used against some innocent.

In any case (Paladin or Thief), if the poison-packing character's conduct is otherwise impeccable and the poison is used against a dangerous foe that must be defeated quickly for some reason (to keep the fire drake in your example from leveling a whole village, for instance), the character ought to get away with it. A dead monster is a dead monster, whether the PCs chopped it up with swords or killed it with poison.

You might want to check out the "Sage Advice" column in issue #249, where I discuss the "sneak attack" option for Rangers (from the *Skills & Powers* book); the two situations share some common points.

I have an elf Ranger character with the Archer kit from *The Complete Book of Elves*. The book says the character can fire two arrows at once from the bow. He can do this with a –1 initiative penalty and a –1 attack penalty. My character is also specialized with the longbow. The *Player's Handbook* says a character specialized with the bow can walk around with an arrow nocked and can simply draw and fire before initiative is rolled: a shoot-first, ask-questions-later, pre-initiative advantage. Could the specialized elven Archer fire two nocked arrows before initiative is rolled? One book says it's done with a

–1 initiative penalty, and the other says there is no initiative roll. I understand that the character would still fire with a –1 attack penalty, but I am curious about the pre-initiative dual shot.

Actually, the *Player's Handbook* says nothing about "walking around" with an arrow ready to fire. It says a bow specialist can fire before any initiative rolls if he starts out with an arrow nocked and drawn and with the foe in sight. (See the Effects of Specialization section in Chapter 5.) It's pretty hard to walk around with a bow pulled back, and even if the character could manage the feat without accidentally shooting his pals in the back several times a day, he still doesn't get off a shot before the initiative roll unless he can see the target before the initiative roll.

I suggest following this particular rule to the letter: One arrow fired before initiative, and then only if the archer meets all the requirements. As "Sage Advice" has pointed out before (in issue #255), characters can use only one fancy bow trick at a time.

Under the *Combat & Tactics* rules, how many attacks does a 7th-level Fighter who is specialized with his weapon have (2 attacks per round normally) if he chooses a guard or charge action? Does guarding or charging reduce the number of attacks a character has?

There is no reduction in the number of attacks the character can make when charging or guarding, but the character still must obey the round's phase structure. If the Fighter is armed with only one weapon, he makes one attack during the phase when the action occurs. For example, if he charges in the fast phase and his charge movement brings an opponent within reach, he attacks once in the fast phase and cannot attack again until the average phase. Note that the armor class penalty for charging applies for the whole round. If the Fighter uses two weapons, he can use both during the same phase, and the attack bonus from the charge applies to both attacks. Remember that a second weapon gives a character only one extra attack each round, so once the character uses the second weapon, he can't use it again on a later phase of the same round.

In issue #232, you said dwarves are treated as size M creatures for purposes of the *Combat & Tactics* rules. What about gnomes and halflings?

Gnomes and halflings have base phases of fast and are considered size S for purposes of which weapons they can use, knockdown dice, overruns, and all other instances in the rules in which creature size is significant.

If a character is sleeping when an encounter begins, how quickly can a character wake up and act? How would you represent the delay under the *Combat & Tactics* rules?

It takes a character a full round to wake up and get into the action. Under the *Combat & Tactics* rules, the character would wake up in his base phase and can get to his feet during the resolution phase, ready to make an action declaration for the next round.

If a character is sleeping when an encounter begins, how quickly can the character wake up and act?

Under the *Combat & Tactics* rules, can you use a block maneuver to counter an attack of opportunity?

Yes, provided you have an attack available to use for the block.

The *Combat & Tactics* rulebook introduces critical hits, knockdowns, and critical events to add to the nasty but rarely occurring rule about death from massive damage from the core AD&D game. Most of these occurrences allow a saving throw vs. death magic to prevent extra damage or special harm. What are the possible adjustments to the applicable saving throw? Do protection items (rings, cloaks) apply as they do for the other saving throws? What about racial resistances (such as the dwarves' saving throw bonus vs. poison)? Do Dexterity/Balance or Constitution/Fitness bonuses apply?

The only bonuses I'd apply would be those from a *luckstone*. You can allow protection items if you like, but those already have adjusted the character's Armor Class. Racial bonuses do not apply. You certainly can add a house rule that allows a character's hit-point adjustment from Constitution to apply, but don't let protective items apply in that case.

Does the death from massive damage rule apply to monsters? It seems logical that it would apply to common monsters, such as high-level orc Warriors, but what about, say, cloud giants? Should it apply to regenerating monsters? To golems and undead? To extraplanar, incorporeal, gaseous, liquid, fiery, gelatinous, plant, or simply weird ones, like an olive slime or a living wall? How about immensely large creatures with a whole lot of Hit Dice, like leviathan whales, zaratani, or gargantua? (No need to ask about the tarrasque, I suppose?)

The rule as presented in Chapter 9 of the *Player's Handbook* applies to characters; monsters aren't mentioned at all, and one could argue that they are exempt from the rule. I don't much like the rule, and I don't think your campaign will suffer if you just ignore it. If you do keep the rule, it should apply to monsters, too, with the following exceptions:

Creatures that aren't alive (golems, undead) are not subject to death from massive damage, nor are creatures without nervous systems or circulatory systems (plants, fungi, oozes, jellies, elementals), nor are creatures without solid bodies (incorporeal, gaseous, or liquid creatures).

Creatures harmed only by magical weapons are not subject to death from massive damage unless they suffer massive damage from a magical source (spell, magical weapon, breath weapon, or the like).

The actual amount of damage that triggers the required saving throw vs. death magic varies by creature size. For tiny, small, or man-sized creatures, it's 50 points; for large creatures, 75 points; for huge creatures 100 points; for

gargantuan creatures, 125 points. Note that all the damage must come from a single attack or event to trigger the save.

If a regenerating creature fails its saving throw vs. massive damage, it is reduced to –10 hit points instead of dying (unless it already had less than –10 hit points). If the creature's description says it cannot regenerate when dead, the creature is slain. Otherwise regeneration works normally to restore the creature's hit points.

Exactly which spells are in the so-called Lesser Divination school?

Exactly which spells are in the so-called Lesser Divination school? There's a player in my group who insists that it's all divination spells of 3rd level or less.

Despite comments to the contrary in the description of the Mage class, the Lesser Divination school contains exactly two spells: *read magic* and *detect magic*. Any Wizard can use these two spells.

Can a spellcaster know an area well enough to cast spells even when he or she can't see? Say a Wizard's front door is within the range of a *dispel magic* spell, but the Wizard is in another part of the house when an *alarm* spell the Wizard has placed on the front door goes off. Can the Wizard cast *dispel magic* on his own front door?

No. Not only must a spellcaster see the target or target point for a spell but also there must be a straight line, unbroken by any obstacle, between the caster and the target point. (See the *Player's Handbook*, Chapter 7.) Certain spells, such as *clairvoyance* and *teleport*, ignore this rule by their very nature. Obviously, a character need not be able to see himself to cast a spell on himself or on any target the caster can touch.

I think it's OK to use a house rule that waives the "see the target" requirement for spells that are cast on some point in space rather than on a specific object or creature (such as *dispel magic* or *fireball*), provided that the caster can specify the exact distance and direction from himself. For example, if it's a dark night and the caster is sleeping 30 feet southwest of his own front door, he can't just say, "I cast *dispel magic* on the front door." He must say, "I cast *dispel magic* centered on a point 30 feet directly northeast of me." The spell still fails if there is a solid object (such as the bedroom wall) between the Wizard and the front door. The Wizard could not use *magic missile* or *charm person* this way, because these spells must be targeted on creatures. For purposes of this rule, treat any constriction too small to admit a human as a solid object; for example, a character could not use this rule to toss a *fireball* through an arrow slit.

Will the 4th-level Priest spell *spell immunity* work on a creature that has magic resistance? What if the creature is using an item that provides magic resistance?

Spell immunity works on a creature that is naturally magic resistant, but the creature must make a roll to see whether its magic resistance spoils the spell unless the creature lowers its resistance (see the *Player's Handbook*, Chapter 9) before receiving the spell. *Spell immunity* never works on a recipient who already is using a protective item, and an item that provides magic resistance is a protective item.

Can the true dweomer spell *Tenser's telling blow* drain all the charges from the *stoneskin* spell?

No, that would take a *dispel* effect, and *Tenser's telling blow* is a strike effect. The spell inflicts its normal damage (20d8 + 20, save for half) on a target protected by *stoneskin* and drains one charge from the *stoneskin*.

What happens when a dual-classed character who started out as a Warrior and has since become something else receives a *strength* spell? For example suppose a 5th-level Fighter/6th-level Mage who started out as a Fighter receives a *strength* spell. Do you roll 1d4 for the *strength* boost because the character is a Mage or 1d8 because the character is a Fighter?

If the recipient of a *strength* spell has an active class from the Warrior group, use the Warrior value for the spell (1d8). A class is "active" when the dual-classed character is earning experience in the class or when the character has full access to the class's abilities.

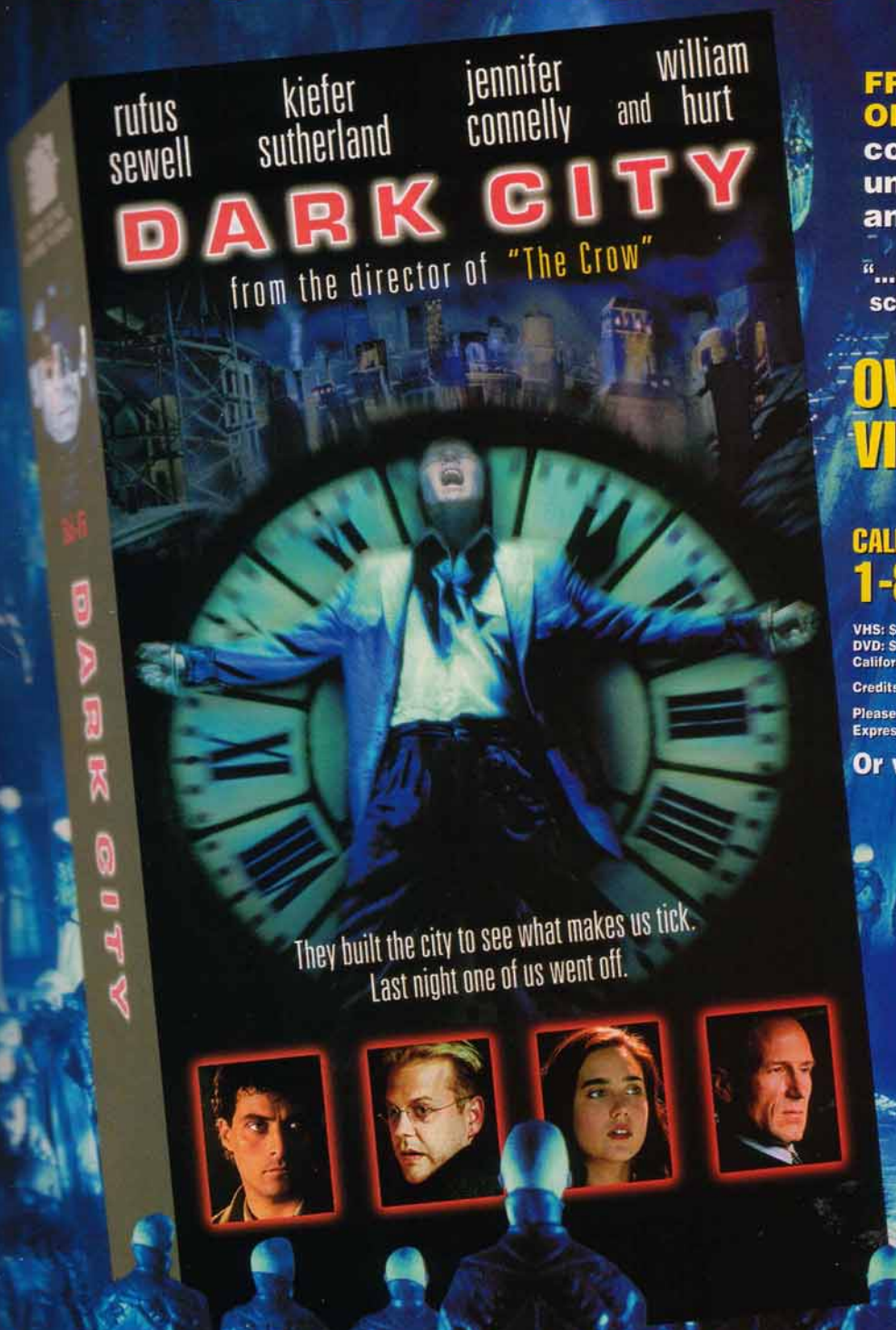
I was having a debate with a friend on how the psychometabolic devotion of *magnify* works when used to magnify the psychoportive power *time duplicate* (both from the *Skills & Powers* book). Can you explain how the *time duplicate* works when magnified two, three, or more times?

When a character magnifies the *time duplicate* power, the duplicate simply remains longer. For example, if the power is doubled, the duplicate remains 2 rounds, if the power is tripled, the duplicate remains 3 rounds, and so on. The Psionicist must jump forward in time long enough to account for the longer duration.

The description of the fast healing trait in the *Skills & Powers* book says that a character recovers 1 hit point within 2–12 turns of receiving a wound. Does this mean 1 hit point per combat or 1 hit point per hit? For example, if a character is hit three times in a combat by a longsword, does he recover 1 hit point or 3 hit points? How do you decide exactly how long the fast healing takes? What happens if the character receives first aid or magical healing before fast healing takes effect?

The character in your example recovers 3 hit points from the fast healing trait, one for each wound. Roll 2d6 to determine the number of turns (ten minutes per turn) required for the healing to take effect. I suggest rolling once for all the character's wounds at the end of combat. If the character receives other forms of healing in the interim, just apply any hit points regained to the largest wound (greatest loss of hit points) first; when all the damage from that wound is healed, apply any left-over points or further healing to the next largest wound, and so on. If the character receives enough points of healing to repair a wound completely, fast healing doesn't help him with that wound.

RESISTANCE IS FUTILE.



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF *THE CROW*
comes a dazzling sci-fi universe where mystery and madness collide.

"...sets a bold new standard for science fiction!" – Bill Bregoli, *Westwood One*

OWN IT TODAY ON VIDEO OR DVD VIDEO

CALL TOLL-FREE AND ORDER NOW!
1-888-812-1112

VHS: $14.98 plus $3.95 shipping and handling
DVD: $24.98 plus $3.95 shipping and handling
California and New York residents please add 8.25% sales tax.

Credits cards accepted: VISA DISCOVER MasterCard

Please allow 3 - 5 weeks for delivery.
Express delivery available for an additional charge.

Or visit your local retailer.

NEW LINE CINEMA presents a MYSTERY CLOCH production an ALEX PROYAS film RUFUS SEWELL KIEFER SUTHERLAND "DARK CITY" JENNIFER CONNELLY RICHARD O'BRIEN IAN RICHARDSON and WILLIAM HURT VALERIE McCAFFREY, C.S.A. SHAUNA WOLFSON VANESSA PEREIRA TREVOR JONES LIZ KEOGH DOV HOENIG, A.C.E. GEORGE LIDDLE PATRICK TATOPOULOS DARIUSZ WOLSKI, A.S.C. BARBARA GIBBS MICHAEL DE LUCA BRIAN WITTEN ANDREW MASON and ALEX PROYAS ALEX PROYAS ALEX PROYAS and LEM DOBBS and DAVID S. GOYER ALEX PROYAS

R

©MCMXCVII New Line Productions, Inc. 1998 New Line Home Video, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

www.newline.com

Does the 3rd-level Priest spell *efficacious monster ward* (from the *Tome of Magic*) affect humans and demihumans, or just "monsters"? Is the effect mobile?

Usually, when a spell works on "monsters" it works on any type of creature. In this case, however, I'm inclined to suggest that "persons" (bipedal, generally human-shaped creatures of human size or less) are not affected.

Spell effects usually are immobile unless the spell description specifically says otherwise. In this case, the spell creates an immobile ward on an area. Note that the spell allows a saving throw. When the monster first encounters the *ward*, it can attempt a saving throw to enter. If the saving throw succeeds, it ignores the *ward*. If the saving throw fails, the creature cannot enter the warded area while the spell lasts, no matter how many times it tries.

Does a character need a *permanancy* spell to create a magical wand?

Does a character need a *permanency* spell to create a magical wand? The various rulebooks seem to contradict each other on this point.

A *permanency* spell is required to make a wand rechargeable. It is possible to make a wand without a *permanency* spell. If this is so, however, charges can be placed into the wand only during its creation. The wand cannot be recharged and becomes nonmagical when its charges are exhausted.

Would you please explain the effect that armor has on the amount of bulk that a character can carry? Page 125 of the *Skills & Powers* book says armor is not counted as bulk, but it has the effect of lowering the total bulk a character can carry or otherwise bear. Where is this information, anyway? And is this really different from having the listed amount of bulk points for armor counted toward the total bulk points a character can carry? Am I missing something here? Please let me know.

The bulk reduction values are listed on Table 66. You're right; reducing a character's bulk capacity is exactly the same as giving armor a bulk rating. I think what the authors were trying to convey is that armor is bulky, but the bulk has less effect when the armor is worn. You can simulate this by doubling the value listed on Table 66 when a character simply carries armor instead of wearing it.

Not long ago, a player character in my campaign *wished* for the abilities of a vampire without becoming a vampire. I thought about it and granted the character two abilities and two hindrances: The character gained the ability to regenerate three hit points a round but also gained sensitivity to sunlight (as listed for drow in the MONSTROUS MANUAL™ book). The character also gained immunity to poison but also gained a strong intolerance to garlic. The player argued that he did not *wish* for the hindrances. I replied "exactly." Am I being unreasonable?

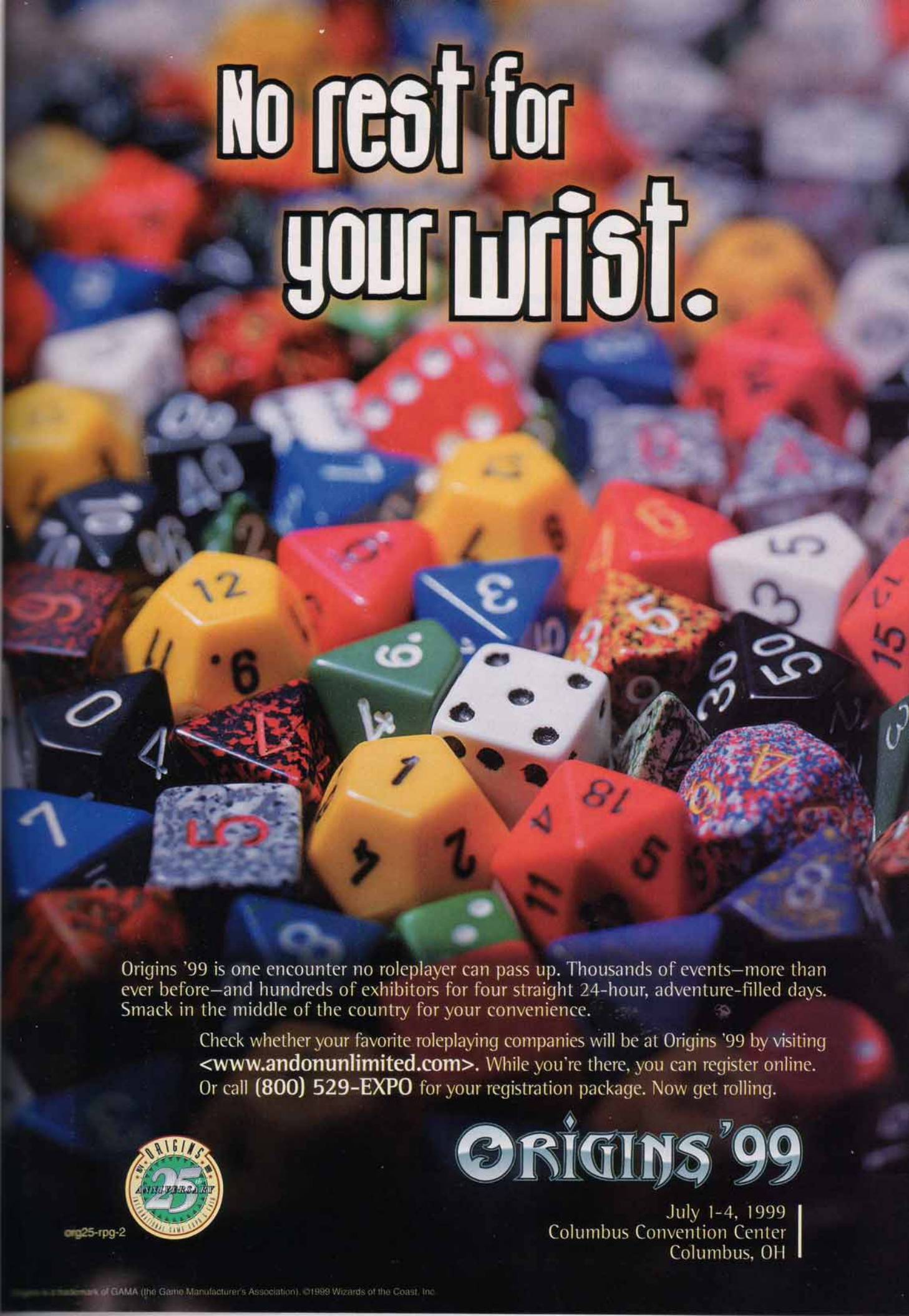
I heartily approve of your eloquent response to your player's complaint. Many players like to think of wishes as bright, shiny gifts from the DM with no strings attached. Nevertheless, it's perfectly reasonable—and actually highly desirable—to exact a price for special abilities gained through a *wish* (or for any other benefit a *wish* grants). The *wish* empowers the player to change campaign reality a bit, but the player should be prepared to accept the consequences for doing so.

In this case, the player got off lightly considering how mild the hindrances are. The potential list of really deadly and troublesome hindrances here is pretty long: sunlight killing the character, developing a need to consume blood (or rest in a bed of his native soil or sleep in a coffin), susceptibility to turning or to holy water, inability to confront a mirror, and so on. It's possible you let the player off too lightly. The hindrances should work nicely if your campaign features lots of above-ground adventures, especially in an urban setting. If your campaign mostly features underground adventures, the hindrances you have imposed will be too easy for the player to avoid and you'll have to make a special effort to bring them into play from time to time.

On the Astral Plane, Intelligence is used to determine THAC0 and damage bonuses. This would seem to indicate that magical items that make one stronger are irrelevant to these calculations when on the Astral Plane. Or, does Strength-enhancing magic always enhance "strength" no matter what particular ability score happens to represent "strength" in a particular place? For example, would *gauntlets of ogre power* still grant a +3 attack bonus and a +6 damage bonus on the Astral plane?

Gauntlets of ogre power grant a Strength score of 18/00, which is irrelevant on the Astral Plane (because it is a plane of the mind). It certainly is possible to create an item that grants a bonus to the quality of "strength," as you suggest, but *gauntlets of ogre power* don't do that. Neither does the *strength* spell or a *potion of giant strength*, a *girdle of giant strength*, or the strength power of an intelligent weapon. All of these effects boost the user's Strength ability score.

Skip Williams reports that one of his more enjoyable jaunts into the planes involved a completely spurious discussion of the Demiplane of Stuff, the place in the multiverse where all extradimensional spaces actually lead. The Demiplane of Stuff is a place crammed with everything from plate armor to old Buicks, and its principal inhabitants are gnomelike humans who wander about dressed in greasy overalls while they endlessly chew tobacco and catalog all the stuff.



Origins '99 is one encounter no roleplayer can pass up. Thousands of events—more than ever before—and hundreds of exhibitors for four straight 24-hour, adventure-filled days. Smack in the middle of the country for your convenience.

Check whether your favorite roleplaying companies will be at Origins '99 by visiting **<www.andonunlimited.com>**. While you're there, you can register online. Or call **(800) 529-EXPO** for your registration package. Now get rolling.

ORIGINS '99

July 1-4, 1999
Columbus Convention Center
Columbus, OH

org25-rpg-2

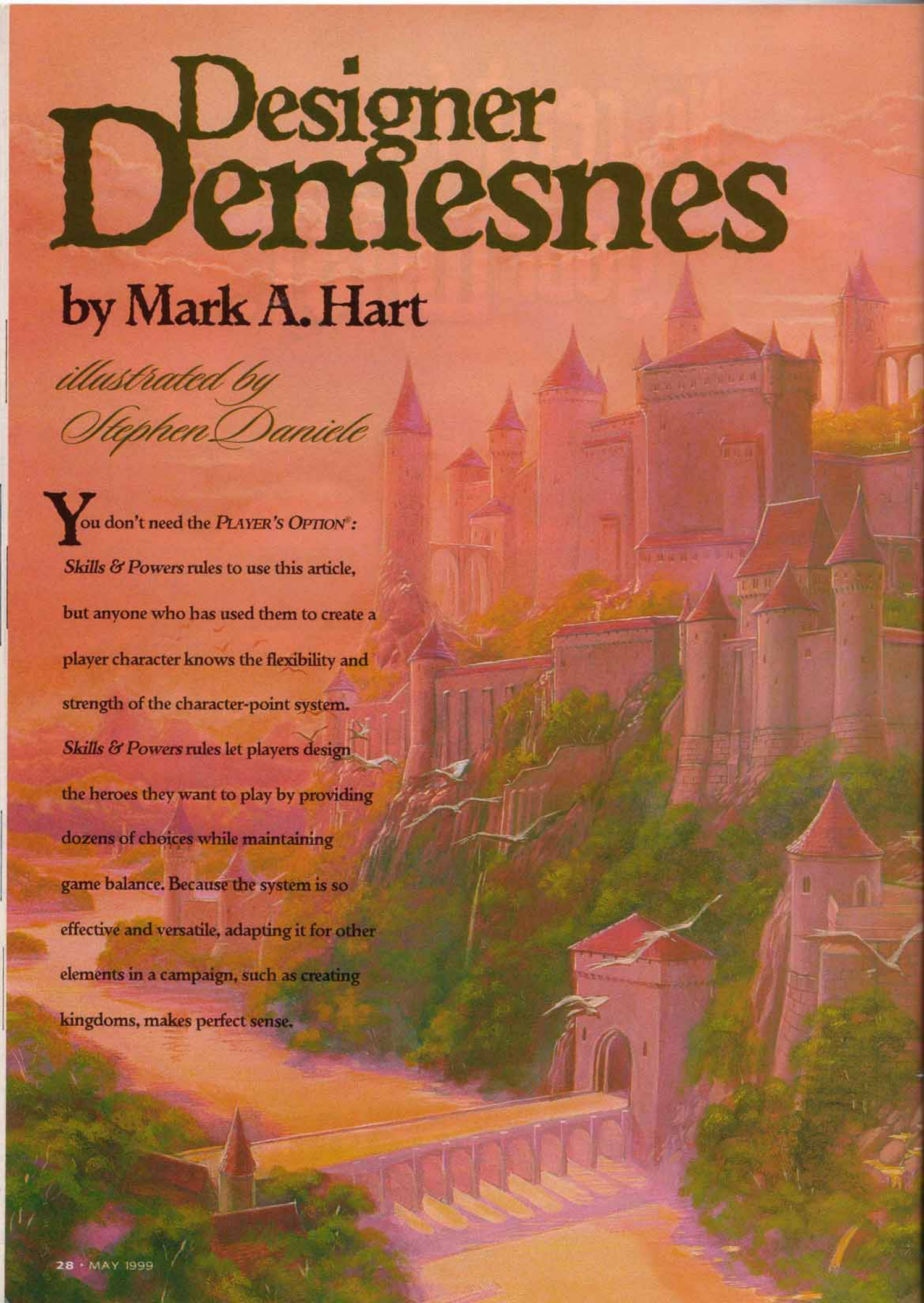
ORIGINS is a trademark of GAMA (the Game Manufacturer's Association). ©1999 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Designer Demesnes

by Mark A. Hart

illustrated by Stephen Daniele

You don't need the *PLAYER'S OPTION*®: *Skills & Powers* rules to use this article, but anyone who has used them to create a player character knows the flexibility and strength of the character-point system. *Skills & Powers* rules let players design the heroes they want to play by providing dozens of choices while maintaining game balance. Because the system is so effective and versatile, adapting it for other elements in a campaign, such as creating kingdoms, makes perfect sense.



The following set of rules applies the *Skills & Powers* system to the design of fantasy kingdoms with "kingdom points" (KPs). With them, you can create a kingdom from the ground up, giving each nation a unique cultural and social atmosphere.

These rules are similar to those in the *Skills & Powers* book. A character gains points based on race and class, and these points are used to purchase skills, special benefits, and powers. For building kingdoms, each domain starts with a pool of points based on its overall size and age. From this pool, you purchase special benefits for the kingdom and choose disadvantages to gain more KPs.

Why use points at all? Why not simply pick and choose benefits for a kingdom and not worry about the bookkeeping? If you feel comfortable building a kingdom without using points, feel free. The point system, however, helps maintain campaign balance and encourages creativity in design.

As you choose benefits and disadvantages, you'll begin to see connections and relationships between the choices. For example, imagine a kingdom infested with monsters. Does the kingdom require a large army to combat the problem? Are the monsters part of a curse? Do nearby nations feel they need to put an end to the monster problem? Every question you answer will further develop the kingdom. Having a budget of points helps you focus on the most important elements of the kingdom, and that focus makes for a more fascinating, cogent world.

Ultimately, the point system is only a set of guidelines, a starting point for your imagination. It should not impede or hamper your creativity. If, during the process, the kingdom runs out of points but absolutely must have a particular special benefit, you should go ahead and fudge the points, but only if there is a creative reason for doing so. Once you have an understanding of how the system works, you can alter it to suit the campaign's needs. You can change the point values and add or alter new themes, benefits, and disadvantages as best suits your own AD&D® game campaign.

Step 1: Choose a Kingdom Type

The first part of the kingdom creation process requires that you determine a basic archetype for the nation. Just as a player generating a character starts out with a basic idea of what type of hero he or she wants to play, you should start with a core concept when designing a kingdom. The type provides an overall impression of what the realm is like.

When choosing a kingdom's type, the classic "good vs. evil" conflict is one of the best places to start. Is the kingdom on the side of good? Does the kingdom follow the forces of evil? Does the kingdom fall between these extremes? The answer might suggest a few types and eliminate others. Sometimes the name of the country suggests a good or evil kingdom—a name like "The Shire" is perfect for a quiet, pastoral land, while "Mordor" suggests a foreboding land of evil.

You should also consider what types of kingdoms the world needs. Each kingdom should fill a special role, whether it be a cultural, social, or plot niche. Consider a party of adventurers; it requires a mix of Warriors, Wizards, Rogues, and Priests to function effectively. A campaign world with too many of one type of kingdom and not enough of another suffers the same problems.

Below is a list of kingdom archetypes, but you should feel free to create more. If a kingdom requires two types to describe it, combine them. If you want three (or more) types for the same kingdom, you should narrow the focus to avoid having a kingdom whose definition is too nebulous. Choose one or two types that are most prevalent in the kingdom and drop the others.

Ancient Kingdom

This is a nation that has existed for tens of centuries. At one time it was a great empire, spanning large portions of the continent. Its armies and navies ruled vast regions, and the kingdom was once a mighty power in the land. Over time, the empire waned and shrank. It granted freedom to some vassal states, while others earned independence through rebellion. By now, the empire has stabilized, holding steady and not fading further into obscurity. The influence of this empire can still be felt in the languages, cultures, and religions of many other nations; it can explain why the Common tongue is so prevalent and why the same pantheon of deities is so widespread. Such a nation is well known for its once great status, and ancient books mention this empire as the center of the known world. Most of the empire's citizens care nothing for conquest and are content with the way things are. This attitude is what separates the ancient nation type from the "decadent empire" (below). Natives of an ancient kingdom know the days of empire are gone and accept that fact. Every few generations, however, a few ambitious leaders long for the "good old days" of glory, and the nation enters a brief stage of conquest and expansion. This stage usually burns itself out after a few years of pointless warfare, starting over again when the next generation of hotheads decides to reclaim its "lost legacy." The nation of Mulhorand in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting exemplifies the ancient kingdom.

Barbaric/Savage Lands

This is more a region than a unified nation. The land is home to many barbaric tribes that compete against one another without benefit of a united ruling government. The barbarians might be farmers, hunters, or raiders. More technologically advanced kingdoms consider the people of this land inferior, and these same kingdoms might have hopes of "civilizing" the barbarians as citizens or slaves. The tribes sometimes cooperate to raid surrounding lands, but such cooperation is rare and short-lived. Every few generations, a powerful leader comes along and unites the clans, leading them in great hordes against other kingdoms. In Earth's history, the Norsemen, the Gauls, and the Mongols were all considered barbaric by other kingdoms. In fantasy literature, the Aiel from Robert Jordan's Wheel of Time series are barbarians, as are the nomadic tribes of the Icewind Dale trilogy. In the GREYHAWK® setting, there are the Frost Barbarians, the Ice Barbarians, and the Snow Barbarians, among others.

Borderlands

A borderland region is not a kingdom in its own right. More correctly, it is a lawless area, a "no man's land" between kingdoms. It serves both as a buffer zone between other nations and as a

dumping ground for criminals, the persecuted, and the banished. Small villages, towns, and minor keeps pepper the region, each with its own ruler and set of laws. Large bands of brigands roam the countryside, preying on anyone they wish. In these wild, ruthless lands, strength is the only true law. Neighboring kingdoms have attempted to conquer this region, but the cost has always far outweighed the meager benefits. The people of the borderlands are stubborn, uncooperative, and too fiercely independent to make good subjects. Borderlands are popular places for adventurers, as there is never a shortage of things to do. The Wild Coast in the GREYHAWK setting and the Dragon Coast in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting are examples of borderland regions.

Chivalric Kingdom

This is a realm of knights, feudal lords, castles and pageantry. The kingdom is in its heyday of power and influence, expanding its holdings where possible. Despite its imperfections, it is a bastion of good. Other kingdoms look up to this kingdom for guidance, leadership, and protection. A chivalric nation is likely to be in direct conflict with villainous nations (see below); if a truly corrupt or evil kingdom exists, you should have at least one chivalric kingdom to oppose it. A chivalric nation is an excellent place for Paladins and Cavaliers to learn their craft, and it might be famous for holy orders of crusaders, knights templar, and seekers. Examples include France or England of the 13th and 14th centuries, Gondor from Middle-earth, the Kingdom of the Isles of Midkemia from Raymond E. Feist's Riftwar series, Furyondy from the GREYHAWK setting, or Cormyr of the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting.

Conquered Nation

Fantasy kingdoms are constantly attacked, invaded, betrayed, and ruined from within and without, so it is not surprising that some eventually fall or surrender. An outside force has conquered this kingdom. Enemy soldiers occupy the kingdom, and foreign nobles control the government. The conquerors might be benign and civilized people who hope to rule wisely, or they might be ruthless scum intent on genocide. Regardless of their disposition, the native population bitterly resents the invaders. A conquered nation is often the site of rebellions, civil war, partisans, and pockets of lawlessness. Some of its natives, however, support or collaborate with the invaders, and they might have been instrumental in the kingdom's downfall. These traitors might believe they are doing the right thing for their country, or they might simply be out for personal wealth and power. In the GREYHAWK® setting, the Shield Lands were conquered by Iuz, while Almor was conquered by the Great Kingdom.

Step 1: Choose a Kingdom Type

- Ancient Kingdom
- Barbaric/Savage Land
- Borderlands
- Chivalric Kingdom
- Conquered Nation
- Decadent Empire
- Demihuman/Humanoid Kingdom
- Desolate Land
- Expanding Kingdom
- Merchant Power
- Mystical Realm
- Nation Under Siege
- Pastoral Homeland
- Religious Land
- Villainous Domain

Decadent Empire

History has shown that every empire based on conquest eventually declines; its demise is merely a matter of time. A decadent empire was once powerful and feared long ago, but it has since fallen into ignominy. The decline has been slow and gradual. The citizens have become increasingly concerned with their own hedonistic pleasures, uncaring of others. From the nobles at the top to the peasants at the bottom, the nation is convinced of its greatness, despite all evidence to the contrary. Art, drama, poetry, and music have become stagnant. Artists no longer compose new works but merely revise the old classics. As the empire rots from within, its leader is either pathetically weak, brazenly cruel, or utterly insane. While the empire turns its feeble energies inward, envious kingdoms watch for signs of weakness, ready to pounce on the wealth this nation possesses. Earth history is filled with empires that fell into decadence; the Roman Empire is probably the most famous example. A fantasy example of a decadent empire is the Kelewan Empire of the Tsurani from Feist's Riftwar series.

Demihuman/Humanoid Kingdom

Some nations are ruled by demihumans or humanoids. There are elven, dwarven, gnomish, and halfling nations in many fantasy worlds, such as the dwarven kingdom of Moria from Middle-earth or the elven island of Evermeet in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting. Creatures such as orcs, goblins, or worse might even rule some of the more remote kingdoms. Politically and socially, humans are the minority in a demihuman or humanoid kingdom, while one (or more) of the demihuman races is in the majority. Given the low birth rates and long lifespans of demihumans, these nations are typically small in population but quite old in history. Demihuman nations are relatively peaceful and safe, while most humanoid kingdoms are places of evil and death. (See villainous domain, below.) As a plot twist, you could have a nation of "civilized" humanoids (more civilized than others of their kind) who are struggling for recognition.

Desolate Land

A cataclysm has nearly or totally destroyed this nation. The disaster might have been recent or lost in the ancient past. Either way, almost nothing remains of what was once a thriving kingdom. Little remains of the realm other than abandoned cities and lost secrets, ripe for plundering by greedy kingdoms. The devastation could have been a natural disaster such as a year-long desert storm, or it might have been something as spectacular as magical fire raining down from the sky. The people of this nation are few in number, and there are few surviving towns left. As an example, a magical attack known as the Rain of Colorless Fire devastated the ancient Suel empire in the GREYHAWK setting—it is now known as the Sea of Dust. Myth Drannor in the FORGOTTEN REALMS was once a great elven kingdom but now lies in ruin after falling to an army of darkness. Istar was once the greatest kingdom of Ansalon in the DRAGONLANCE® setting before the First Cataclysm destroyed it.

Expanding Kingdom

This is an expansionistic, land-grabbing kingdom that seeks to increase its holdings, civilize the frontiers, and become the dominant world power. Such kingdoms usually begin with a charismatic or brilliant military leader. In such nations, the military has overwhelming power and influence. Decide why this nation seeks to expand and what it hopes to accomplish. Does the kingdom feel threatened by its neighbors? Does it border on expanses of frontier teeming with monsters? Perhaps the kingdom lacks important natural resources and feels it would be better to take than to trade. Other nations fear the grasp of this conqueror and might form alliances to contain its aggression. Weaker nations might sign nonaggression pacts or alliances with the aggressor. The expanding kingdom likely has established buffer zones and vassal states to protect its borders. An expanding kingdom is usually abundant in one or two resources, such as population or metals, but this is not a requirement. History is replete with examples of expansionistic nations. Alexander the Great led the Macedonians down the road of conquest, Julius Caesar led the Romans, and Charlemagne led the Franks. The Great Kingdom of Greyhawk was once an expanding kingdom.

Merchant Power

This kingdom is typically small in size but great in influence due to its dominance as a trading power. The kingdom prides itself on trade and banking. Her ships and caravans travel the trade lanes to the far corners of the world. The coin of this realm might be the "gold" standard for other kingdoms, and many nations depend on this kingdom for luxury items, metals, spices, and other goods. Any nation foolish enough to attack the merchant power could find its own economy crippled. From Earth history, the Phoenicians were a merchant power in the ancient Mediterranean region, while the Dutch were a merchant power during the colonial period. These nations gained great influence through trade as opposed to overwhelming force of arms. In the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, the kingdom of Sembia is a formidable merchant power.

Mystical Realm

This land is most famed for its mysterious and magical atmosphere. Myth, magic, and the unexplained cloak the mystical nation from the outside world. Any mention of this realm inevitably leads to rumors of miracles, supernatural events, and foretellings. Faerie-haunted woodlands, foreboding sentient forests (like Mirkwood on Middle-earth), or ruins haunted by ancestral spirits might dominate the landscape. A mystical realm is wrapped in the occult, and no one truly knows (or wants to know) what goes on there. This mysticism might be sinister, as it is in the kingdom of Stygia in Robert E. Howard's world of Hyperboria, or it might be spiritually enlightened, as in legendary Tibet. More powerful mystical realms often possess their own sacred guardian or patron spirit with powers beyond that of mortals. This person or creature roams the land, unimpeded by earthly powers, its true purpose known only to itself. Tom Bombadil of the Old Forest and Treebeard of the Fangorn are such creatures in Middle-earth, as is the Simbul of Aglarond in the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting.

Nation Under Siege

There are kingdoms that, against all odds, continue to resist overwhelming opposition. They are forever in danger of invasion and attack, and they struggle against one or more deadly enemies on a daily basis. The people of such a kingdom have adopted a siege mentality—they see themselves as alone with no real friends or allies left in the world. Citizens are constantly in training, preparing for or fighting wars and skirmishes. Young children are indoctrinated at an early age, even to the point of carrying daggers when they are old enough to run. Communities are tightknit and suspicious of strangers but protective of one another. There is little time for art, culture, or relaxation, and love of luxury is a sign of weakness. The people have become so wrapped up in survival that they have forgotten how to live. The death of a friend or loved one is common, and the people have developed a grim humor tinged with resignation toward death. The city of Armengar from Raymond E. Feist's Riftwar saga is an example of a besieged nation.

Pastoral Homeland

This is a region, valley, or tiny kingdom that is the calm at the center of the world around it. This happy, agrarian kingdom is relatively free of troubles, monsters, or tyrants, and it enjoys great prosperity and happiness. Such a kingdom serves as a useful starting place for a campaign (i.e., the heroes grew up there and left because it was too peaceful), or as the place threatened by the coming of evil. The Shire in The Lord of the Rings and Emond's Field from the Wheel of Time series began as pleasant places, untouched by strife, but in the end they could not hide from the events of the "outside" world.

Religious Land

This kingdom is a theocracy, ruled by a religious figure who claims divine right of leadership from a deity or a pantheon of deities. The kingdom has one official state religion, and officials actively dissuade or persecute other beliefs. The state religion might be an offshoot or variation of a larger faith and thus considered heretical by outsiders, or the state religion might be the mainstream version. The religion might be good, strict, vile, or anything in between at your preference. Regardless, the people of this nation might be intolerant of other beliefs. Those daring to express opposing views find themselves persecuted. A religious nation need not be intolerant—faith and religion can be influences for the greater good. A religious nation could be a shining example to neighboring kingdoms. For example, a kingdom following the dictates of a healer goddess could be a peaceful haven. In the GREYHAWK setting, the Theocracy of the Pale is an example of an intolerant religious nation, while the Archclericy of Veluna is an example of a virtuous religious nation.

Villainous Domain

A truly villainous, despicable kingdom is important for any fantasy world—it gives the characters an enemy they love to hate. A cruel warlord, netherworld fiend, vile necromancer, greater vampire, consortium of mind flayers, or other villain rules the domain. The nation's armies are vast and powerful, its magic dark and twisted. Even the landscape is foreboding. The villainous nation often initiates wars to gain land, destroy adversaries, or to strike fear into

its enemies. Conquest might be a necessity if its rulers need slaves, sacrifices, or spare zombie parts on a constant basis. When this evil kingdom goes to war, massive hordes of humanoids and legions of undead boil out from dark fortresses. Even when the armies lie dormant, the villainous kingdom spreads its corrupting influence into the heart of other nations by employing spies and sorcery to achieve its goals. Often, only one thing stands in the way of the villainous domain—brave nations who refuse to give in to tyranny, such as a chivalric kingdom. Examples of villainous domains abound in fantasy literature, with the land of Mordor from J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth being one of the most infamous. Other examples of villainy incarnate include Iuz from the GREYHAWK setting and Thay from the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting. Such nations are so evil that they cannot possibly be perceived as misunderstood or abused.

Beyond the Types

As mentioned, you should add other types as desired. These types sometimes overlap, and they are by no means all-encompassing. Browsing through history or fantasy literature can inspire other ideas for kingdom types.

The overall type of a nation can and should change over campaign time. For example, a kingdom might start out as a barbaric frontier land, develop into an expanding kingdom, then after many centuries fall into decline and become a decadent empire. Enemy nations, noticing the weakness of the once-mighty empire, attack and invade. After a fierce war and defeat, the former empire becomes a conquered kingdom.

Once you have designed a kingdom, it is often interesting and enlightening to develop some of its history and think about its future: Where has the kingdom been? Where is it now? Where is it going? The status and type of a kingdom could change over the course of a single campaign or over the course of many campaigns.

Example: *Girdalen is a small, landlocked country. Looking at the list of types above, we decide it falls into the category of "nation under siege." Girdalen is locked in mortal conflict with a villainous enemy. It is a nation constantly at war, and its survival is tenuous at best. In addition, we decide that faith has been one of the few things that has allowed Girdalen to survive intact, and thus another type would be "religious nation." Our nation is thus named the Theocracy of Girdalen. We decide the combination of types selected would make Girdalen intolerant of outsiders and suspicious of anyone different, yet its citizens are extremely close-knit and protective of one another.*

Kingdom Points Table

Size of nation	KPs	Age of nation	KPs
Small	15	Young (<100 years)	5
Medium	20	Mature (100–500 years)	10
Large	25	Old (501–2000 years)	15
Empire	30	Ancient (>2000 years)	20

Step 2: Special Benefits

After choosing the kingdom's type, you can choose special powers and benefits for that kingdom. The type is important in deciding which special benefits the country possesses.

You should know how many "kingdom points" to spend on special abilities. The Kingdom Points Table shows how many points a kingdom has based on the realm's geographical size and population, as well as its age. A larger nation typically has greater resources and opportunities, and an older realm has had more time to develop and progress than its younger neighbors. To use the table, first choose the land size of the kingdom and look to the right to see how many points the kingdom gains. Then, determine the age of the kingdom to find how many additional points are acquired. Add the two together for a total.

When deciding whether a kingdom is "small," "medium," or otherwise, consider how big this kingdom is relative to the entire campaign area, not how big it is in actual square miles. For example, if the campaign region were the size of modern western Europe, then France or Germany would be large, while Switzerland would be small. If the campaign area approximates the size of Europe and what are now the Russian states, then France or Germany would fall into the "medium" size category.

In deciding how old a kingdom is historically, you can either use the numbers in the table as guidelines or, if the campaign area is much younger or much older than these numbers, create an alternative time scale. In a land of relatively young kingdoms, a nation might be "old" if it had been founded two centuries ago, whereas in a land of ancient empires, "young" might be anything earlier than ten centuries.

Thus, a medium kingdom would receive 20 points. If it were young in age, it would gain another 5 points, providing it a total of 25 kingdom points. Our example nation, Girdalen, is small but has survived for over five hundred years, providing it with a total of 30 (15 + 15) kingdom points to spend.

Feel free to modify these numbers, keeping in mind that no kingdom can have or do everything. Part of the fun of nation-building is making do with what is available. The best method is not to modify the suggested point totals until after you know what items to choose from the lists below. In addition, with this system a kingdom can take disadvantages (see below) to gain additional kingdom points.

Once a point value has been determined, look through the following list of special benefits. Each entry is listed in a format similar to the skills and powers listed in the PLAYER'S OPTION system: the name of the special benefit appears with a point cost in parentheses, followed by a brief description of what the benefit entails. In addition, each description indicates which of the above kingdom types would go best with the benefit, and which would be inappropriate. For example, a peaceful pastoral kingdom should not have a massive army without an extremely good reason.

Abundant Natural Resources (5/+5)

The kingdom is blessed with plentiful crops, large expanses of land, bountiful sources of wood, good building stone, or similar resources. For every 5 kingdom points spent, the nation gains another abundant resource. Thus, for 10 points a kingdom could select plentiful crops and good building stone. The kingdom not only meets its own needs

Step 2: Special Benefits

Abundant Natural Resources	5/+5
Abundant Population	10
Alliances	5/10
Blessed	5
Center of Learning/Culture	5
Exceptional Product	5
Feared	10
Great Magic	15
Metal Rich	10
Powerful Army	10
Powerful Navy	10
Priest Support	10
Prosperous	10
Protected Location	10
Reputation	5
Technological Edge	5
Wonder of the World	10

with the resource but also exports materials to other nations, thus generating wealth. A kingdom with abundant natural assets will be the envy of less fortunate kingdoms. Greedier neighbors might try to seize these resources by force. For high quality resources of metal, the kingdom should select the "metal rich" benefit, below. *Preferred:* Barbaric lands, chivalric kingdom, expanding kingdom, merchant power. *Restricted:* Borderlands, desolate land.

Abundant Population (10)

For good or for ill, the kingdom possesses great numbers of citizens. In many cases, this translates into large quantities of cheap soldiers that can overwhelm an enemy with massive numbers. A kingdom with abundant population must explore, expand, and conquer other lands to meet the needs of its citizens. *Preferred:* Barbaric lands, decadent empire, expanding kingdom, villainous domain. *Restricted:* Desolate land, mystical realm, pastoral homeland.

Alliances (5/10)

The kingdom has a military alliance with a neighboring nation for 5 points. For 10 points, the alliance involves several nations. With such a coalition, an attack on this kingdom activates the alliance, bringing her allies into the war automatically. The theory is that an aggressor nation will hesitate going to war knowing it would face several enemies on multiple fronts. Decide which nations are part of the alliance, what the terms and conditions are, and why the nations originally formed the alliance. Kingdoms form alliances to counter an existing, growing, or perceived threat from a stronger power. Kingdoms might use a system of alliances to maintain the balance of power in a region. There is a down side to this benefit, however. If another alliance nation is attacked, this kingdom must respond as demanded by its treaty obligations. Thus, the kingdom could find itself drawn into a war it did not start. The alliance system dragged most of the European nations into World War I in rapid succession before anyone understood what had happened. *Preferred:* Ancient kingdom, chivalric kingdom, merchant power, expanding kingdom, villainous domain. *Restricted:* Desolate land.

Blessed (5)

A deity has granted divine favor to the nation as a whole. This blessing is a source of great pride for the citizens and the envy of outsiders. Typically, the blessing extends to one or two facets of life in the kingdom; the crops are plentiful, the land is free of plagues, etc. Decide what deity granted such a boon, why, and how long it will last. Other nations are hesitant or reluctant to attack a nation that has a deity's blessing. If the populace is thankless or takes the boon for granted the deity can remove the blessing or replace it with a curse. (See disadvantages, below.) *Preferred:* Chivalric kingdom, demihuman kingdom, expanding kingdom, pastoral homeland, religious land, villainous domain (evil deities). *Restricted:* Conquered nation, decadent empire, desolate land.

Center of Learning/Culture (5)

Other nations of the world recognize this kingdom as a place of enlightened learning and culture. Scholars, artists, and philosophers flock to the cities of the kingdom to learn from the masters and to surround themselves with like-minded people. The kingdom might have the largest library in the world, or perhaps it is home to a distinguished academy of learning. *Preferred:* Ancient kingdom, chivalric kingdom, demihuman kingdom (especially gray elves), merchant power, religious land. *Restricted:* Barbaric lands, desolate land, mystical realm, pastoral homeland, villainous domain.

Exceptional Product (5)

The region is noted for an exceptional product or resource, one that is highly sought by those who want the best in quality. The type of products could range from steel weapons (e.g., Damascus steel) to well-bred horses, stone (such as Italian marble), or ships. The secret of the quality might lie in the base materials (high quality iron, marble, or animals) or the design (as with ships), or it might be in the manufacturing process. For example, the Japanese produced swords of exceptional quality through a process of forge-welding wrought iron and a high-carbon product called *tamahagane*. Many people desire the secrets of the product but are unable to discover or duplicate them, or they just do not have access to the necessary materials. Exporting this exceptional product brings great wealth to the kingdom and elevates the reputation of its artisans above those of other lands. This special benefit is different from "technological edge" (see below) in one simple way. The kingdom exports and sells an exceptional product, but it does not sell or export a technological edge—they jealously guard such secrets. *Preferred:* Chivalric nation, demihuman kingdom, expanding kingdom, merchant power. *Restricted:* Barbaric land, desolate land, pastoral homeland.

Feared (10)

Evil and aggressive kingdoms, or those domains steeped in dark sorcery, work best with this special benefit. Other nations fear this kingdom, perhaps with cause or perhaps just out of fear of the unknown. The kingdom might be unbeatable on the field of battle, or it might have a tendency toward horrible brutality. Some barbaric kingdoms use fear tactics to demoralize their enemies, defeating them without a fight. Other nations, cowed or fearful of reprisals, might hesitate to attack this kingdom. Fear is useful as a weapon—it discourages enemies from attacking and often allows the kingdom to get its way without bloodshed. *Preferred:* Barbaric lands,

Great magic can give a kingdom the edge over its neighbors.

expanding kingdom, mystical realm, religious land, villainous domain. *Restricted:* Conquered nation, nation under siege, pastoral homeland.

Great Magic (15)

The kingdom is famed for some aspect of its magic. The kingdom might have the best academies of magic available, or the kingdom might be blessed with one (or more) of the greatest Wizards of the age (such as Elminster on Toril or Bigby on Oerth). For whatever reason, the kingdom has more magical resources than most lands, giving it a measure of respect and power. Enemies think twice before attacking a land with such magical ability. Wizards from other lands visit the kingdom, hoping to gain an education or enlightenment. The kingdom could also possess one or more powerful artifacts in its arsenal. If a kingdom is renowned for academies of magic, you might want to specify which schools of magic the nation specializes in teaching. For example, certain kingdoms would outlaw necromancy, while others would specialize in the darker arts. The nations of Rashemen and Thay in the Realms are both famed for their magic, though of vastly different kinds. *Preferred:* Ancient kingdom, decadent empire, expanding kingdom, mystical realm, religious land, villainous domain. *Restricted:* Barbaric lands, conquered nation, desolate land, pastoral homeland.

Metal Rich (10)

The nation has abundant metal resources, including high-quality iron ore. As a result, the kingdom has equipped its military with the best armor and weapons money can buy. Furthermore, the kingdom exports its surplus metals to other lands to earn great wealth. *Preferred:* Chivalric kingdom, demihuman kingdom (dwarves or gnomes especially), expanding kingdom, merchant power, religious land, villainous domain. *Restricted:* Pastoral homeland.

Powerful Army (10)

The kingdom is renowned for its armed might. The kingdom's army might be powerful due to sheer numbers, it might have earned a deadly reputation, or it might simply be undefeated in battle. The army is famed for its discipline, tactics, and organization, or it is famous for its outright brutality and savagery. The armies of the Roman empire were famed for their tactics and formations, while people feared the hordes of Genghis Khan for their cruelty and ferocity. *Preferred:* Chivalric nation, expanding nation, villainous domain. *Restricted:* Borderlands, conquered nation, desolate land, pastoral homeland. A barbaric nation will not usually have a powerful army unless a great leader unites the tribes; such a force typically survives only as long as its leader remains alive and active.

Powerful Navy (10)

The kingdom has a superior navy that permits it extensive control over the

A kingdom's reputation can inspire fear as well as respect.

seas. The kingdom can dictate how other nations use the seas, and her ships control the sea lanes. The kingdom might have the best shipbuilders and designers, or it might just have an overwhelming number of ships. Earth history has proven that no would-be conqueror can long sustain an empire without control of the seas, and those that dominate the seas can gain great power. The English navy was essential in building and maintaining the British Empire throughout the colonial period, while the Carthaginians gained power in the ancient Mediterranean region with their naval power. *Preferred:* Chivalric kingdom, expanding kingdom, merchant power. *Restricted:* Conquered nation, desolate land, pastoral homeland.

Priest Support (10)

The kingdom has a good level of Priest support. There are Priests in quantity available to support the army with healers and spell power, and the government can enlist the aid of Priests for investigations, interrogations, rooting out undead, and granting minor blessings. The nation follows one major deity or pantheon as the state religion. The Priests share power with the government, or they might even control the government. *Preferred:* Chivalric kingdom, mystical realm, religious nation, villainous domain (evil Priests). *Restricted:* Borderlands, conquered nation, decadent empire, desolate nation.

Prosperous (10)

The land is relatively wealthy and successful. From the lowest social classes to the top, the citizens are better off compared with their counterparts in other kingdoms. The nation's coffers are bursting with gold, the nobles are content, and even the peasants enjoy unusual prosperity. When the land prospers, the ruling class can afford to be more generous and lenient, and all castes benefit. You should have a good reason why the kingdom is in such good financial shape and at whose expense. It is also important to remember that wealth draws envious attention from other lands. *Preferred:* Chivalric kingdom, expanding kingdom, merchant power, pastoral homeland. *Restricted:* Conquered nation, desolate land, nation under siege.

Protected Location (10)

Natural terrain provides excellent boundaries and defenses for the kingdom. Mountain ranges, thick areas of forest, or vast swamps block off attack routes. The kingdom might even be an island, protected by the sea itself. Terrain defenses make it difficult for would-be attackers to invade, and sustaining a supply line over them is a challenge. Of course, such terrain is no guarantee of protection—Hannibal led his Carthaginians through the Alps to attack the Romans from the north, a feat considered impossible for an army. *Preferred:*

Demihuman kingdom, mystical realm, nation under siege, pastoral homeland, villainous domain. *Restricted:* Expanding kingdom, merchant power.

Reputation (5)

The kingdom has a reputation that leads other nations to respect, fear, or favor it. Decide what type of reputation the kingdom has and how much of it the kingdom earned. For example, the nation might be renowned for its honesty and integrity in keeping treaties. A nation could be infamous for its cruelty to those who dare oppose it. The reputation is so powerful that it influences how other kingdoms negotiate with this land. Regardless of what the reputation is, it is beneficial to the kingdom in some way. A reputation can have its downside, however, and can sometimes cause problems as well as solve them. For example, a kingdom with a reputation for honesty might find others trying to take advantage of it. This special benefit is open to any type of nation and restricted to none, but make sure the reputation fits the kingdom's type. A villainous nation should not be famous for its honesty and integrity, and a chivalric nation should not have a reputation for cruelty.

Technological Edge (5)

The kingdom has an advance in one type of technology that gives it an advantage over other nations. For example, the kingdom might possess the secret of forging steel while other kingdoms must make due with crude iron weapons. Perhaps they are skilled in engineering, shipbuilding, or stonework. As another example, the kingdom could be renowned for its superior knowledge of medicine and healing or its engineers and architects. Perhaps they have a superior grasp of cartography and navigation, allowing their ships to sail farther and faster. The technological edge need not be military in origin or benefit, although conflict and competition often spur technological advances. *Preferred:* Chivalric kingdom, expanding kingdom, merchant power, mystical realm. *Restricted:* Barbaric lands, desolate nation.

Wonder of the World (10)

One of the great man-made wonders of the world can be found in this kingdom. This wonder attracts pilgrims, visitors, scholars, and the curious from all across the world. It invokes awe, respect, admiration, and envy from other nations. This great wonder could be mystical (the Oracle at Delphi), gigantic (the Colossus of Rhodes), lavishly opulent (the palace of Versailles in France or the Taj Mahal in India), or magical (an immense bonfire that never burns out, for example). Although the presence of a wonder does not protect a kingdom or guarantee it anything, it is a source of great prestige and pride. The wonder might have special powers not known to the general public. (What if the Colossus could move?) *Preferred:* Chivalric kingdom, decadent empire, religious land, mystical realm, ancient kingdom, demihuman kingdom. *Restricted:* Barbaric lands, pastoral homeland.

Once you have read through the list of special benefits, it's time to read through the disadvantages before making any final decisions. It's helpful to write down any special benefits that are appropriate and interesting, and do the budgeting and editing later.

Example: *We look over the list and decide to select several special benefits for the Theocracy of Girdalen. These benefits are purchased from the nation's 30 kingdom points. In addition, we budget 15 points in disadvantages (which we'll select in Step 3), giving us 45 total points for Girdalen to spend. Keeping in mind the types of "religious nation" and "nation under siege," we select the following special benefits:*

First, Girdalen is in a protected location. Mountains guard the kingdom on three sides. These mountains are wild and somewhat monster-infested, but they offer formidable protection against invaders. Second, out of necessity Girdalen has built and maintained a powerful army. The Girdaleni army is well trained, well equipped, and highly motivated—they are fighting for their homes and families. The troops have abundant battlefield experience and are among the most veteran of any land. Third, with all of the mountains in the region, Girdalen is blessed with excellent sources of iron ore for forging steel weapons and armor. Fourth, the Theocracy has the blessing of Solarian, the campaign's deity of light and the sun. The Girdaleni people have held to their faith and followed the dictates of their god for centuries. Solarian considers this "his" nation, and he has granted them abundant crops. Finally, Girdalen has a large number of Solarian priests. These priests provide substantial support to the army and the nation. The deity also provides his priests with more power than he grants to Solarian priests of other nations.

Step 3: Disadvantages	
Cursed	5/10
Decadent Ruler	5
Despised	5
Devastated	5
Exposed Location	5
Frontier	5
Impoverished	10
Internal Strife	10
Metal Poor	10
Mixed Population	5
Monster-Infested	5
Occupied	10
Powerful Enemy	10
Reputation	5
Resource Dependency	5/10

Step 3: Disadvantages

In the PLAYER'S OPTION rules, a disadvantage is a weaknesses or foible that further defines a character and provides a few extra character points. Similarly, kingdoms also might have disadvantages to provide definition and realism—if human beings are imperfect, their governments are doubly so. Kingdoms cannot take more than 15 points from disadvantages; any points gained beyond that are lost. Every kingdom should have at least one disadvantage and most will possess two or three. During the design process, you might have to come up with several ideas of your own to add to the list of disadvantages. As with the benefits mentioned above, each description lists preferred and restricted types. Be careful not to select disadvantages that contradict the benefits already selected for a kingdom. For example, a kingdom with "protected location" should not also have "exposed location."

Cursed (5/10)

A terrible magical or god-inspired curse has swept the land. The people suffer under the curse, unable to find a cure. Decide what effects the curse has, why the curse afflicts the kingdom, and how

to lift the curse. Curses on a large scale often involve withered crops, dying animals, and blighted landscape. For 5 kingdom points, the curse is something that returns on a recurring basis (every full moon, for example) and then is dormant. For 10 points, the curse afflicts the kingdom constantly. You should also decide how outsiders view the curse. Do they feel pity for the cursed nation, or do they consider the curse well earned? *Preferred:* Ancient kingdom, conquered nation, decadent empire, desolate land. *Restricted:* None. Even a pastoral homeland can find itself plagued by a curse.

Decadent Ruler (5)

The ruling family is decadent and depraved, and its members care nothing for the people under their power. They wallow in excesses of wealth, land, and opulence while their subjects starve and suffer deprivations. The ruling family is possibly insane, deranged, or just plain moronic. A decadent ruler bleeds the nation dry of wealth, ruins the nobles, and brings about full-scale rebellion sooner or later, leaving the nation weak and helpless to invaders or those seeking the throne. King Louis XVI and his wife, Marie Antoinette, were decadent rulers who ignored a financial crisis that destroyed the aristocratic foundations of France, leading to the French Revolution. *Preferred:* Ancient kingdom, decadent empire, desolate nation, religious land, villainous domain. *Restricted:* Pastoral homeland.

Despised (5)

This goes beyond mere reputation and into the realm of hatred. Other kingdoms openly loathe this nation for some major reason. A kingdom suffering this onus finds it difficult if not impossible to gain anyone's assistance, trust, or aid in times of need. A kingdom might combine this disadvantage with the special benefit "Feared" (see above). This disadvantage is appropriate for a villainous domain or a sinister mystical realm. *Preferred:* Barbaric lands, conquered nation, decadent empire, expanding kingdom, mystical realm, religious land, villainous domain. *Restricted:* Merchant power, pastoral homeland.

Devastated (5)

A natural disaster or magical catastrophe has left a portion of the kingdom ruined and scarred. Nature has done its worst—forest fires blacken the landscape, earthquakes have swallowed entire cities, and plagues have devastated the population. Decide the nature of the disaster and how widespread it is. Such devastation could leave the kingdom easy prey for conquerors as well as rebellion by the discontented populace. This disadvantage differs in one substantial way from the Desolate Land type (see above) in that this disadvantage is not permanently debilitating. After time and effort, the damage can be repaired. A desolate nation remains desolate for years to come. *Preferred:* Conquered nation, desolate land, mystical realm, nation under siege. *Restricted:* Pastoral homeland.

Exposed Location (5)

Due to terrain surrounding the kingdom, or because of its strategic location (e.g., near a major river or a natural harbor), the kingdom is inviting to any would-be invader. The terrain surrounding the kingdom offers little or no protection. In addition, the kingdom could be a stone's throw away from an enemy power. For example, the city of Seoul, capital of South Korea, is in an exposed location. The city contains a quarter of the country's population, and yet it lies less than 30 miles from the border of North Korea. *Preferred:* Conquered nation, desolate land, merchant power, nation under siege. *Restricted:* Demihuman kingdom, mystical realm, pastoral homeland.

Frontier (5)

The majority of the kingdom is still unexplored or is covered with thick, forbidding wilderness such as trackless deserts, thick forests, or tangled jungle. As a result, the actual arable land available is less than is evident on a map. The kingdom is eager to develop and civilize these wilderness regions to exploit the resources and provide more living space for its citizens. This disadvantage works well with the "monster-Infested" disadvantage, below. *Preferred:* Barbaric lands, demihuman kingdom, expanding kingdom. *Restricted:* Ancient kingdom, decadent empire, pastoral homeland.

Impoverished (10)

The kingdom is financially destitute. It owes money to lenders, to neighboring nations, and to its own citizens. Public works sit idle and abandoned. Worse for the kingdom, unemployment is rampant, and the army has gone without pay for months. Meanwhile, the nobles are refusing to pay their taxes. A poverty-stricken kingdom is inviting invasion from all sides and will be ill-prepared to fend off attacks. The army might be on the verge of mutiny or collapse, and groups of dissatisfied nobles might decide they can run things more effectively if they take power. *Preferred:* Conquered nation, decadent empire, desolate nation, nation under siege. *Restricted:* Barbaric lands, expanding kingdom, merchant power.

Internal Strife (10)

Internal strife between factions, clans, or families tears the nation apart. As a result, the nation has no functional central government (or, alternatively, the strife is a result of a weak central government) and everyone has made a grab for power. The feuding might be a violent conflict or a war of words, but either way the land is in turmoil and without direction. This internal strife makes politics dangerous, but the right type of strong ruler can step in and seize power. A nation suffering an internal schism is easy prey for schemers from within and conquerors from without. *Preferred:* Barbaric lands, borderlands, chivalric kingdom, conquered nation, decadent empire, religious land. *Restricted:* Desolate land, nation under siege, pastoral homeland.

Metal Poor (10)

The nation lacks a reliable and steady source of quality iron ore. It must use substitutes or pay dearly for small quantities of iron from other lands. As a result, the armed forces possess leather or hide armor and weapons that use other materials such as bronze, bone, or stone. This puts the army at a distinct disadvantage when facing better equipped foes. *Preferred:* Barbaric nation, conquered nation, desolate nation, pastoral nation. *Restricted:* Chivalric nation, merchant power.

Mixed Population (5)

Many nations and kingdoms include mixed populations of different tribes, clans, and cultures within their borders. These diverse cultural and ethnic groups do not always get along well

with one another, and one majority group might try to dominate or exterminate the minority groups. Those in the minority might find themselves reduced to second-class citizenship, slavery, or worse. A mixed population is not an actual disadvantage by itself, but the relations between the differing groups can lead to feuding, a bad reputation with other nations, or even civil war. For example, a kingdom might be primarily human but have scattered groups of elves living within its borders. The humans resent the elves for trying to control the forestlands. They see elves as manipulative, inferior creatures who do not deserve equal or fair treatment. It takes surprisingly little to set one group of people apart from another; differences can be racial, ethnic, religious, or cultural (e.g., a population of "barbarians" living near a more civilized republic). *Preferred:* Barbaric lands, borderlands, conquered nation, decadent empire, demihuman kingdom, expanding kingdom, religious land. *Restricted:* Ancient kingdom, desolate nation.

Monster-Infested (5)

The nation has a monster problem. Large areas of the kingdom are haunted, infested, or overrun with creatures inimical to humans and demihumans. Determine what types of monsters are most prevalent and why there are so many of them. Dragons, trolls, humanoids, and undead are among the most likely monsters to cause problems. This disadvantage works well with the disadvantage of "Frontier" (see above). The kingdom must spend a great deal of money and effort to combat these monstrous populations. Such lands often become infested with another group of dangerous, unpredictable creatures—adventurers. *Preferred:* Barbaric lands, borderlands, chivalric kingdom, demihuman kingdom, desolate nation, mystical realm, villainous domain. *Restricted:* Pastoral homeland.

Occupied (10)

The land has come under partial control of an invading force. This enemy occupies extensive stretches of the kingdom with garrisons and raiding parties. The enemy might claim to own some or all of the kingdom, but it is unable to complete the conquest or subdue the entire population. The native citizens fight back, and ongoing warfare is certain. *Preferred:* Barbaric lands, borderlands, conquered nation, chivalric kingdom, decadent empire, desolate land, nation under siege. *Restricted:* Pastoral homeland.

Powerful Enemy (10)

The kingdom has had a blood enemy for as long as anyone can remember. The enemy is at least as strong as this kingdom, and the animosity between them is legendary. There will never be peace, and the bloodshed will not end until one side eradicates the other. People can no longer remember the reasons for the hatred—they have learned to hate without knowing why. Both nations are in a constant state of armed readiness, and the military has great importance in politics and everyday life. Any nation can have a powerful enemy, although it should be rare for a pastoral homeland.

Reputation (5)

A kingdom can have a good reputation, as described in the special benefit "reputation," above, but it is also possible to have a poor or negative reputation. A nation might be known for its tendency to break treaties and ignore alliances. A kingdom might be infamous for its persecution of spellcasters, or it could be known for its intolerance and bigotry toward foreigners. Decide the kingdom's reputation and whether it earned that reputation. Regardless of what the reputation involves, it is a hindrance to the nation during negotiations, trade agreements, and at times when the nation needs outside assistance. *Preferred:* Barbaric lands, decadent empire, expanding kingdom, mystical realm, religious land, villainous domain. *Restricted:* None.

Resource Dependency (5/10)

The kingdom is heavily dependent on a neighboring nation for a critical resource—food, metals, wood, etc. Choose what the resource is and what nation provides the resource. A kingdom that suffers a resource dependency is at the mercy of its suppliers. War, pestilence, political disagreements, and natural disasters can all interrupt imports, bringing the kingdom to its knees. For example, an island nation might need to import food to supplement its meager crops. *Preferred:* Conquered nation, expanding kingdom. *Restricted:* None.

Example: *To help pay for the special benefits selected earlier, Girdalen needs 15 points of disadvantages. Following the types established earlier, this is easy to accomplish. We select two disadvantages.*

First, Girdalen has a powerful enemy. This is the nation (a villainous one at that) determined to crush Girdalen, and the two kingdoms have been locked in mortal conflict for centuries. Girdalen is strong enough to maintain its sovereignty but not strong enough to go on the offensive.

Second, Girdalen has gained a reputation for being an intolerant, narrow-minded nation. The people of Girdalen see themselves as the "chosen of Solarian," and they see all other kingdoms as weak or immoral. As a result, few kingdoms are willing to help Girdalen in its struggle against evil.

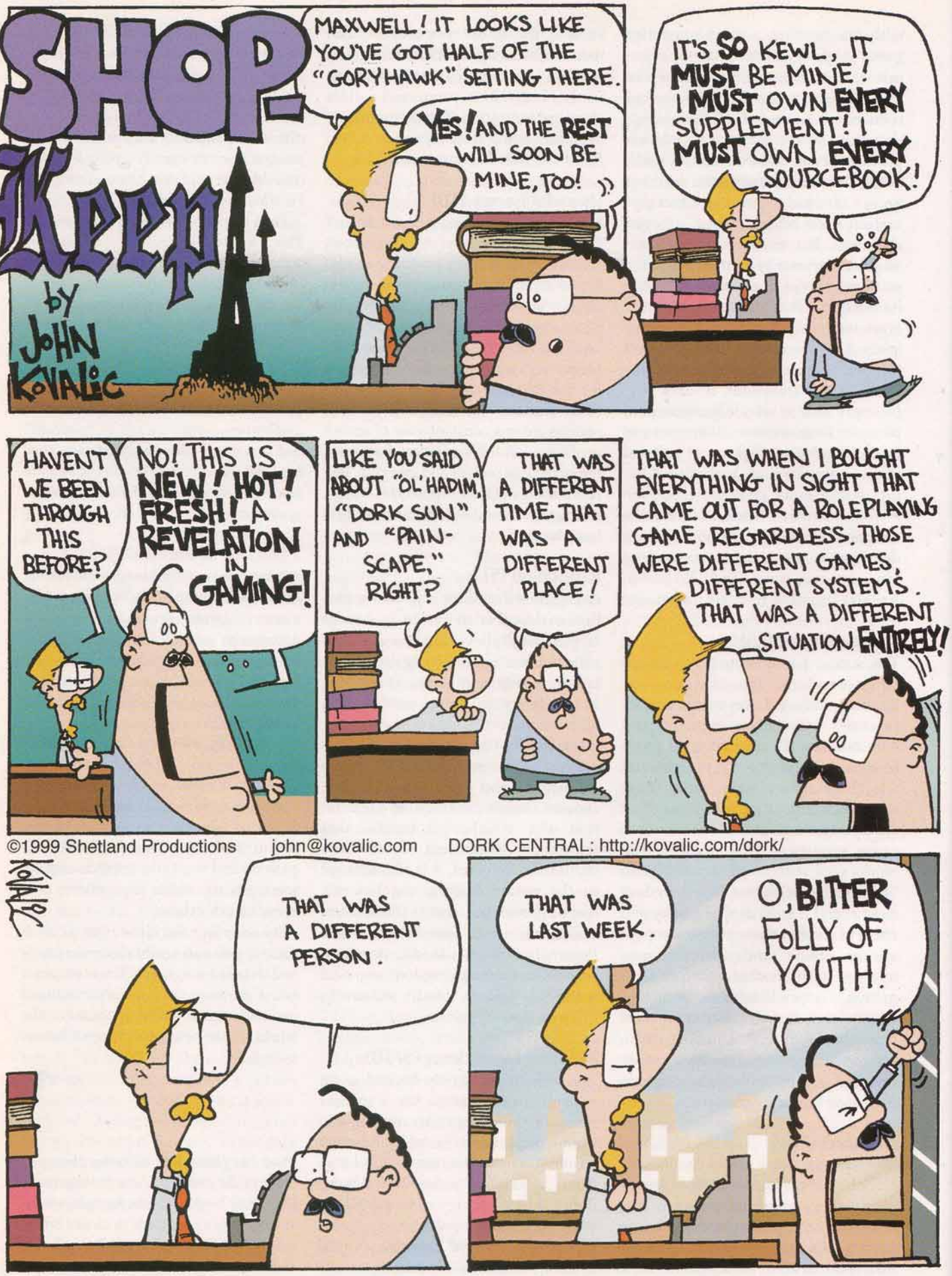
Putting It All Together

After purchasing the kingdom's benefits and disadvantages, bring these elements together and write a short description of the kingdom. Explain why the kingdom possesses its special benefits, why it suffers the problems it does, and what life there is like for the average citizen.

Ultimately, the most important question is how it all affects the player characters. A PC raised in a monster-infested frontier barony would be quite different from one who grew up in the greatest city in the known world. Where a PC grew up and lived affects the character's social status, skills, equipment, and even character class.

By adapting the ideas from *Skills & Powers*, you can easily design exciting and detailed kingdoms. Great empires, evil kingdoms, and dynamic nations can be designed quickly, populating the world for the next generation of heroes to explore.

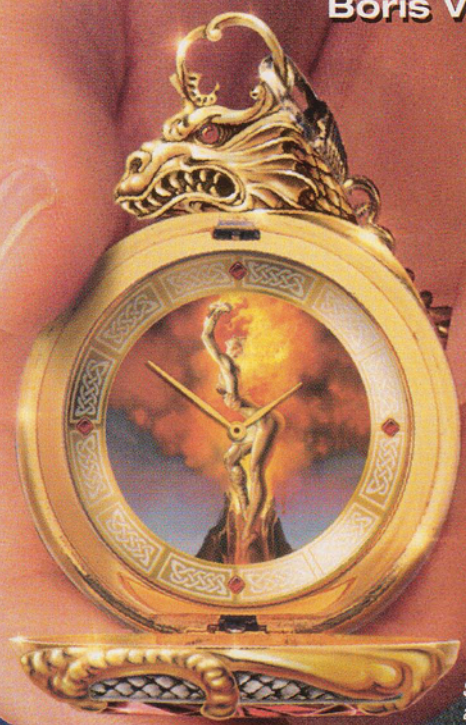
Mark has found that allowing players to share in the creation of the fantasy world ultimately forges a place where players feel at home, like a place they've visited before. Any storyteller worth his gold knows that audience participation is the only way to tell a grand saga.


SHOP-Keep
by JOHN KOVALIC
MAXWELL! IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT HALF OF THE "GORYHAWK" SETTING THERE.
YES! AND THE REST WILL SOON BE MINE, TOO!
IT'S SO KEWL, IT MUST BE MINE! I MUST OWN EVERY SUPPLEMENT! I MUST OWN EVERY SOURCEBOOK!
HAVEN'T WE BEEN THROUGH THIS BEFORE?
NO! THIS IS NEW! HOT! FRESH! A REVELATION IN GAMING!
LIKE YOU SAID ABOUT "OL' HADIM," "DORK SUN" AND "PAIN-SCAPE," RIGHT?
THAT WAS A DIFFERENT TIME. THAT WAS A DIFFERENT PLACE!
THAT WAS WHEN I BOUGHT EVERYTHING IN SIGHT THAT CAME OUT FOR A ROLEPLAYING GAME, REGARDLESS. THOSE WERE DIFFERENT GAMES, DIFFERENT SYSTEMS. THAT WAS A DIFFERENT SITUATION ENTIRELY!
©1999 Shetland Productions
john@kovalic.com
DORK CENTRAL: http://kovalic.com/dork/
KOVALIC
THAT WAS A DIFFERENT PERSON.
THAT WAS LAST WEEK.
O, BITTER FOLLY OF YOUTH!

A sensational World Premier from the Knightstone Collection.

THE MISTRESS OF FIRE POCKET WATCH

A timepiece featuring the original art of one of the world's leading fantasy artists – Boris Vallejo.



Shown actual size of approximately 2¼" (5.72 cm) in diameter.

Fully sculptured spring-action lid.

Complete with handsome pouch, and chain.

Dramatically accented in 24 karat gold and sterling silver.

Powered by a precision quartz movement.

Boris Vallejo. One of the most widely collected fantasy artists of our time. The creator of a world where your wildest of dreams come true. Now, Boris conquers the dimension of time, with the creation of his first-ever pocket watch. A bold, provocative work with The Mistress of Fire captured in a memorable portrayal on the face. The intricately sculptured spring-activated lid depicts a fierce dragon, his eye ablaze with a fiery red crystal cabochon. He clutches a larger stone hand set in the middle of the lid. Rich with accents of 24 karat gold. And the minted medal of Knightstone Collections is set into the reverse of the watch. Let this beauty light your fire for just $69.

THE KNIGHTSTONE GUARANTEE. If, for any reason, you are not completely satisfied with your purchase, simply return it to us within 30 days for replacement, credit or refund.

Please mail by May 31, 1999.

Knightstone Collections
One Tower Road • Media PA 19063-5711

Yes! Enter my order for The Mistress of Fire, Boris Vallejo's first-ever pocket watch.

No payment is required now. I will be billed in 2 equal monthly installments of $34.50* each, with the first payment due prior to shipment.

**Plus my state sales tax and a one-time charge of $3.95 for shipping and handling.*

SIGNATURE _____
ALL ORDERS ARE SUBJECT TO ACCEPTANCE.

MR/MRS/MISS _____
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.

ADDRESS _____ APT. # _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE # (_____) _____

22179-24-001

KNIGHTSTONE COLLECTIONS

"Fools! Your feeble attempts to thwart my plans have failed! Now I shall become..."

Master of the World

by Stephen Kenson · illustrated by Mark Nelson

A Villian's Primer for World Domination

So, you want to conquer the world. Just how do you go about it? Villains in novels, movies, and comic books have concocted endless plans to seize ultimate power for themselves. Gamemasters, on the other hand, must create their own plans for villains to seize ultimate power.

To make your life easier, here are almost a dozen plots for your villains to attempt and your players to thwart ... if they can! These plots work in virtually any roleplaying game setting where villains capable of world domination exist, from AD&D® fantasy to far-future adventure in the STAR*DRIVE™ setting for the ALTERNITY® game, or comic book super heroes like those in the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Adventure Game.

Why Rule the World?

The first question to ask when creating a would-be world conqueror is this: Why bother trying to rule the world in the first place? Taking over the world is no simple matter, and keeping control of it can be even harder. Why put yourself through all that trouble? Well, megalomaniacal world conquerors are not noted for being reasonable or mentally stable, but they usually have reasons for their actions, however deranged they might appear to others. A villain's motivation for trying to control the world often dictates the sort of plan he or she uses.

Some villains want to control the world out of a simple lust for power and a desire to be the biggest fish in the pond, the king of the hill, the big kahuna. These bad-guys often have the most limited vision. They probably wouldn't know what to do with the world if they actually gained control of it. They have a great deal of power at their disposal, but not a lot of imagination or intelligence. They go for the most direct plans for world domination, such as cowing the nations of the world into surrender.

Other villains actually believe the world would be better under their "benevolent" guidance. They have solutions to all the world's problems, if only the fools who run things are willing to step aside and let the villain take the reins of power. And if they're not, then the villain simply must take over. It's in everyone's best interests, after all. Of course, the villain's plan for "improving" the world almost certainly involves things like the creation of a police state, draconian laws, and the "enforced reduction of population."

Many world conquerors have a particular ideology they want to push on the rest of the world. Some believe in rule by a particular class of people (be it wizards, dragons, scientists, robots, or psionicists) while others follow a political or social agenda. Examples include everything from neo-Nazi criminals who want to build a new Reich on the rubble of civilization to utopian idealists who think their methods will end crime and injustice in the world (usually at the cost of individual liberty). Religion often plays a role in world conquering; a religious order (with or without the direct involvement of a deity) might try to exert control over everyone. This need not be an evil faith. In the DRAGONLANCE® campaign setting, an attempt by the good Kingpriest of Istar to rule all of Ansalon and force his beliefs on others led to the first Cataclysm.

For some villains, taking over the world is only the first step in an even larger master plan. The villain might want a staging ground to build an army capable of conquering other worlds, in space or on different dimensional planes. (Humans make good soldiers, or at least good cannon fodder.) Taking over the world might also be the first step toward reshaping it—or even the whole universe—to suit the villain's desires. A magical villain might want to transform the world into a haven for demons or pave the way for an extraplanar invasion force. An alien villain might be looking for a new colony world for his people and find the campaign world perfect, provided a few small environmental "adjustments" are made—using the inhabitants as slaves, of course.

Lastly, some villains want to take control of the world only so they can destroy it or eliminate all human life from it. The alien invaders might find humans useful as workers, but once the conquerors finished altering the environment, humanity might not be able to survive

(and could end up as food). A robot villain might want to eliminate all organic life to create a world of machine intelligences. A beast-master might want a world in which there are only animals, while an aquatic villain might want to melt the polar ice caps and cover the world in water so he can rule a worldwide ocean. An evil deity might want to destroy the world and start over again, creating a new world in his image. Conversely, a villain who already controls the world might end up bored with supreme power and decide to chuck it all and destroy everything. A world conqueror's scheme might include a fail-safe doomsday plan that destroys everything if his plans are thwarted.

Roads to Conquest

There are many ways a villain might try to take over the world. In nearly every case, there is some warning of the villain's plot before it all comes together, allowing the heroes to find out what the villain is planning and put a stop to it before it happens. Occasionally, the villain succeeds, and the heroes must free the world. Here are some classic world domination schemes:

Behind the Scenes

This scheme is probably the most subtle of all world-domination plots. The villain uses a campaign of propaganda and influence to put an apparently honest person in power. In truth, that person is a thrall of the villain or the villain in disguise. Behind-the-scenes plots usually involve a complex web of intrigue and influence in which it's difficult to tell whom to trust. Villains often take advantage of the beliefs and fears of ordinary people to help their plan along, such as using a political movement against a certain class of people to place a "ringer" candidate into a political race. The person the heroes think is the villain is only a puppet of the real mastermind, who is waiting in the wings.

Example: *A powerful Stellar Nation (VoidCorp or the Thuldan Empire from the* STAR*DRIVE *setting are good candidates) wants to exert greater influence over the Galactic Concord through a complex web of espionage, blackmail, and the placement of "ringers" in positions of power within the Concord administration. The nation's secret agents work behind the scenes to expand the nation's influence and, ultimately, allow it to control the fate of the Concord. When the heroes discover clues pointing toward a conspiracy to seize control of the Concord, who can they trust? It's up to them to uncover the plots of the enemy agents and foil them before they go too far.*

Blackmail

The villain has something, perhaps a doomsday weapon, with which to blackmail the world into giving him supreme power. The doomsday weapon is often stolen first, giving the heroes some warning of the villain's plans and a chance to stop him before everything is in place. The weapon might have its own guardians sworn to recover or destroy it, and these characters might be able to aid the heroes, provided they can convince the guardians of their good intentions.

An interesting variation of this plot is when the villain has something the entire world wants enough that they're willing to surrender their freedom in exchange for it. It might be world peace, the secret of eternal youth, or a source of totally clean and unlimited energy. This often leads to an economic domination scenario (described later).

Example: *A powerful lich threatens the kingdoms of the civilized world in an AD&D campaign. The undead villain has unleashed a terrible magical plague upon a small city, decimating the population. The plague is swift, lethal, and incurable, even by the most powerful Priests and Wizards. Unless the kingdoms surrender to the lich king's will and become part of his kingdom in life, they will be forced to do so in death. There is one hope, however. A sage has discovered an ancient reference to a similar plague from when the lich-king was a living Wizard. If the heroes can find a certain rare plant, it might provide a means to immunize the populace against the plague. Unfortunately, the plant grows only in the lich-king's domain, guarded by his undead minions.*

Cosmic Power

The villain has almost unlimited power at his command, enough so that taking over the world isn't all that difficult. He simply steps in and announces that he's in charge. Anyone who says otherwise is immediately vaporized (or something equally unpleasant). Generally, the villain has a fatal weakness or a secret to his power the heroes can discover in time to defeat the villain and take his power away, banish him, or both. The adventure is a quest for information about this fatal flaw and the tools to exploit it, all while avoiding the villain's minions. This scenario works well for cosmically powerful super-criminals and fantasy villains like evil gods.

Example: *There are many devices of near-infinite power in the* MARVEL SUPER HEROES *game. AIM (Advanced Idea Mechanics) might try to recreate the infamous Cosmic Cube, perhaps at the behest of a villain like the Red Skull or Doctor Doom. With the Cube, a villain has nigh-infinite power to alter reality (Reality Alteration 20, or better). The heroes must be clever and play upon the villain's psychological weaknesses to recover the Cube and defeat him.*

Doomsday Device

In some cases, a villain might try to take over the world by unleashing a doomsday device rather than using it for blackmail. The device can be an engineered plague, a magical cataclysm, a computer virus, an army of unstoppable robots or creatures, an orbital death-ray, or just about anything else your fiendish mind can imagine. The reason for using the device is usually tied to the villain's motivations. A robotic villain might use an engineered plague or a nuclear holocaust to wipe out organic life to

repopulate the world with machines. A lich might want to kill the living so he can rule over a kingdom of the dead. Another villain might use a weapon to reduce the planetary population or wipe out a particular segment of it to realize his plans.

Example: *In the STAR*DRIVE setting, a criminal has escaped Insight authorities with secret files on a doomsday weapon developed for Galactic War II but never used: a powerful, self-replicating Grid virus that could completely cripple the communications and information processing systems of known space in a matter of months. Once unleashed, the virus is unstoppable; it would infest the Grid for decades, if not centuries. The thief who stole the virus is a deranged Mechalus who wants to end the Grid's power over his people so they can return to their warrior ways. Naturally, Insight does not want the knowledge of this weapon to spread to other Stellar Nations, so they choose an elite team of heroes to find the thief and prevent him from using the virus—at any cost.*

Duplication

The duplication plot involves replacing important people in positions of influence with duplicates under the villain's control. These duplicates might be androids, shapeshifters, evil twins from a parallel universe, or even alien pod-people. Once the villain has enough duplicates in place, the world is under his control, and most of the populace suspects nothing. The heroes themselves might even be likely targets for "replacement." (Who knows? Perhaps one or two of them already have been ...)

Example: *Strange events have been occurring recently. Kingdoms normally at war with each other have declared peace, while former allies have gone to war. New laws are being put into place, and many kingdoms have begun to oppress or persecute Wizards and Priests. All of these events point toward the strange behavior of certain rulers and influential nobles. In truth, they have been replaced by doppelgangers who have assumed their forms and now direct events to suit the plans of their master (who may be an evil Wizard or a powerful doppleganger noble). The heroes must expose the conspiracy while evading the authorities who think them traitors or criminals. Perhaps someone the heroes think they can trust has also been replaced by a doppleganger agent.*

Economic Domination

In this scenario, the villain intends to gather enough wealth to buy the world or a controlling share in it. This plan is one most often followed by organizations, especially evil megacorporations and world-spanning criminal conspiracies. The villain commits immoral acts to increase profit margin and acquire large amounts of cash and resources, while diminishing the value and resources of his opponents. Although economic domination is often subtle and behind the scenes, many villains realize that war helps stimulate economies, and the best way to de-value an opponent's assets is to destroy or damage them.

Example: *While exploring the ruins of an ancient civilization on a distant world, the ALTERNITY game heroes discover a fantastic piece of advanced technology. Agents of an unscrupulous megacorporation catch wind of the find and want to seize it for their employers, knowing that whoever holds the secrets of this technology can revolutionize the galaxy and gain almost unlimited wealth and power as a result. The heroes must keep their find out of the wrong hands and decide whether they are willing to destroy it to ensure that the megacorporation can never acquire it.*

Metamorphosis

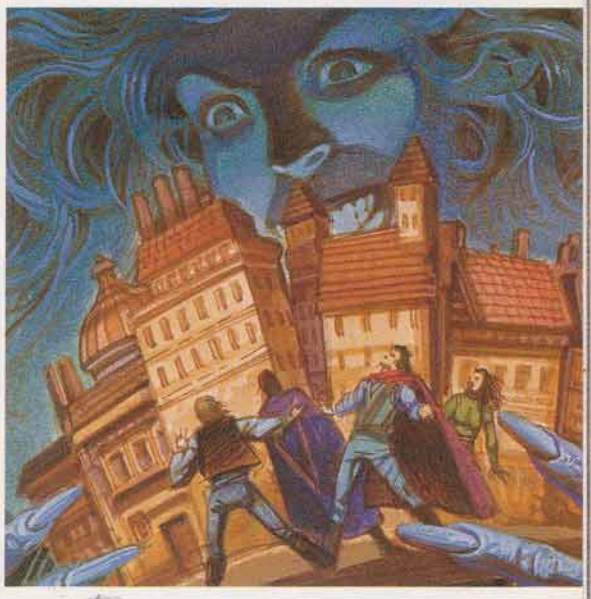
Similar to the duplication scenario, this plan involves transforming humans into beings more amenable to the villain's rule. For example, a reptilian villain might devise a formula to turn the population into lizard-people under the villain's control. Robotic villains plan to turn humans into machines or obedient cyborgs. Alien villains plan to genetically alter humans into a slave-race. A magical villain might have a spell to turn everyone into his monstrous thralls. Often, the heroes are the only ones unaffected by the metamorphosis, leaving them facing a hostile, transformed world. They must defeat the villain and find a way to restore everyone to normal, and they must be careful not to harm transformed friends and innocent people.

Example: *In the "Live Kree or Die!" storyline involving the Mighty Avengers, a group of renegade Kree calling themselves the Lunatic Legion attempted to transform the population of the Earth into a new race of neo-Kree. The Legion used a Kree omni-wave projector hidden in the Blue Area of the Moon. Other alien races have tried similar plans in the past to turn humans into a slave race.*

Military Conquest

This is one of the most straightforward conquest schemes. The villain attacks the world with a vast army to take over using sheer military might. The villain's army might be made up of normal soldiers (possibly mind-controlled, see below), an alien invasion force, a demonic horde from some sort of netherworld, or an army of machines, animals, giant insects, or even animated plants. Generally, the villain's army is too powerful (or too strange) for conventional military forces to fight against for long. (Otherwise, the heroes have little to do.) The heroes must overcome the villain directly or find some weakness in his "invincible" army.

Example: *Armies in the service of an evil power are a common theme in many AD&D campaign settings. For example, the armies of Iuz and the Greyhawk Wars in the World of GREYHAWK® setting, the Dragonarmies of the Dark Queen in the DRAGONLANCE® setting, the endlessly battling armies of fiends and other creatures from the PLANESCAPE® setting, and the warring armies and nations of the BIRTHRIGHT® setting. Most of these armies are controlled by a powerful leader, and they crumble when that leader is defeated. For example, when the Heroes of the Lance killed*



Lord Ariakus and drove off the Dark Queen, the Dragonarmies were defeated.

Mind Control

This is the most classic world domination plot of all. The villain seizes control of the minds of everyone in the world, or perhaps just the people in key positions of power. This can be through telepathic influence, powerful magic, drugs, airborne pheromones, orbital mind-control rays, or any other means imaginable. Once again, the heroes (being of the strong-willed sort) are often some of the only ones left unaffected, allowing them to avoid the villain's mind-controlled minions and come up with some way of reversing the process and defeating the villain. Heroes dealing with hordes of mind-controlled normal people are faced with the dilemma of having to overcome them to stop the villain, but not wanting to hurt any innocent people in the process, much like the Metamorphosis scenario above.

Example: *Psionically gifted individuals have been disappearing of late. The disappearances can be traced to an underground group of illithids, who are kidnapping these people as part of a gruesome scheme. The brains of the psionicists are removed and preserved in special crystalline containers. These form psionic amplifying devices that can magnify the mental signals of the illithids. They plan to place the devices in strategic spots located throughout the Underdark, then broadcast a mental signal, allowing them to seize control of most of the human and demihuman populations of the world. Their new slaves will subdue those resistant to the illithids' influence, then begin work on transforming the surface world into a place fit for illithid habitation. The heroes must put a stop to the mind flayers' plans.*

New Reality

Some villains actually plot to change reality itself to gain control of the world. The villain might have access to some sort of cosmic or magical power able to re-make reality as desired. Many villains also try time-travel to alter history in their favor. The heroes might or might not be aware that the world is different at first, depending on whether or not they've been changed along with everything else. This scenario gives players an opportunity to play alternate-world versions of their characters, often with different backgrounds and abilities, as they try to restore the world to the way it should be (a popular comic-book or sci-fi theme). The scenario becomes even harder when it appears (at least on the surface) that the villain's world is actually better than the "real" world. Of course, the heroes always find the flaw in the villain's paradise that gives them cause to return things to normal.

Example: *In the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting, a Red Wizard of Thay has discovered an ancient scroll with a secret spell for traveling through time. He has gone back into Toril's distant past, to the Arcane Age, and plans to alter history, making himself the leader of a world ruled by powerful Mages. A good Wizard, such as Elminster or one of his allies, sends the heroes back in time to stop the Wizard's plan. This provides a great opportunity for FORGOTTEN REALMS heroes to explore the ARCANE AGE™ setting, and to meet some of the legendary figures of the Realms. Perhaps in stopping the Wizard's plan, the heroes change some historical events themselves. What impact will those changes have upon their return?*

World in a Bottle

In this scenario, the villain literally captures the world and places it somewhere under his control. It might be shrunk and placed in a bottle, transported to an alien dimension (where the ground rules all favor the villain, of course), trapped in a "fold" or "pocket" in space, and so forth. Or perhaps the villain is literally so large or powerful that he can pull the world out of orbit! Not only do the heroes have to stop the villain, they also have to find a way to return the world to where it should be, which might be difficult without the villain's cooperation.

Example: *In the RAVENLOFT® setting, a powerful Dark Lord inflicts a twisted new scheme on the Domain of Dread. He creates a miniature replica of Ravenloft, in exacting detail, peopled by miniature puppets. Using powerful magic, he causes everyone to fall into a deep, enchanted sleep and transfers their minds and spirits into the tiny replicas, placing all of Ravenloft under his control on a single tabletop in his laboratory. The heroes wake up one morning, thinking nothing is amiss. Slowly they discover that Ravenloft seems changed and that they also seem different. Eventually, they discover they are not truly alive, merely living minds inhabiting tiny golem bodies. The heroes have to find a way of ending the enchantment and restoring everyone to normal, possibly by reluctantly allying themselves with other fiends or Dark Lords trapped within the miniature.*

Leading the Rebellion

And the villain's plan would work, too, if it weren't for those pesky heroes. They're the ones who must put a stop the evil plan before it happens, or lead the rebellion to overthrow the villain afterward.

Generally speaking, villains rarely get to rule the world. When they do, it isn't for long. Unless you're interested in running a campaign with the heroes as members of an underground resistance struggling against the villain's rule, the heroes must stop the villain's plan quickly. Fighting to prevent a villain from taking over the world is a high-stakes adventure, so the players should feel some urgency to succeed. If they don't, they should have to deal with the consequences.

If you do want to run a "heroes as leaders of the rebellion" series, then the New Reality means of conquest is the simplest. That way, when the heroes defeat the villain, the world is restored to normal and it's as if the villain's conquest never happened. Only the heroes (and possibly the defeated villain) remember it. No messy cleanup and no lasting impact on the world as a whole. The same is generally true of Mind Control and Metamorphosis scenarios: When the villain is defeated, everyone "wakes up" none the wiser.

Otherwise, the Gamemaster and the players have to deal with the repercussions of the villain's takeover, which can still lead to some interesting stories. The players will quickly discover that overthrowing the evil warlord is oftentimes the easiest part of the process. Dealing with putting the world back in order afterward can be the really hard part.

Steve Kenson is a freelance writer and the author of many game books. He spends his free time coming up with new and interesting ways to take over the world.

Death is the only reward for those who fail.

Behind you lie the gates to the stronghold of New Jollis, the largest city in all of South Vormis. You stand in the central quarter before the legendary Big Rocs' Cafe. The Duke has declared a state of martial law until the brigands that have been terrorizing his lands are defeated. Great riches and fame await the heroes that succeed, and their names shall be sung by troubadours throughout the land.

RUBIES of EVENTIDE

Adventure and Glory
await you in this Radical
New Online Role-playing Game.

- Over 200 Race/Class combinations
- Scores of shops with thousands of items
- See what your character sees in a 3D world
- Hundreds of magic spells that you can alter to suit your needs

www.rubiesofeventide.com

Here there be dragons...

... and spells, magical items and monsters, character kits, weapons and powers, and proficiencies ...

DRAGON® Magazine expands the AD&D® universe each month with game articles you can use in your own campaign. Each issue also includes the latest game and book reviews, Sage Advice, interviews with your favorite authors and artists, and more!

Dragon® Magazine

Return this subscription form today—

You don't want to miss a single exciting month!

Fill out this form and mail it, with your payment, to the address below. *(Send U.S. funds only)*

Name_____

Address _____

City_____ State/Prov._____

Country_____ Zip/Postal Code_____

Method of Payment:

☐ Check ☐ Money Order ☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA

Credit Card Number_____

MC Bank No. _____ Expiration Date_____

Signature_____ Date _____

Mail this card with payment to:
DRAGON Magazine
Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
P.O. Box 469107
Escondido, CA 92046-9107
or Fax to: 425-204-5928

Dragon®

Subscribers in the U.S. and Canada will receive their first issues within 8 to 10 weeks.
All prices are subject to change without notice.

Save up to 46% off Newsstand price!

Subscription Type:

☐ New ☐ Renewal (enclose mailing label)

To U.S. addresses

☐ 1 year (12 issues) for $34.95
☐ 2 years (24 issues) for $63.95
☐ 3 years (36 issues) for $89.95

To Canadian addresses

☐ 1 year (12 issues) for $41.95
☐ 2 years (24 issues) for $75.95
☐ 3 years (36 issues) for $103.95

To foreign addresses

☐ 1 year (12 issues), surface mail, for $57.95

DRADM98

DRAGON is a registered trademark of TSR, Inc. © 1998 TSR, Inc. All rights reserved.

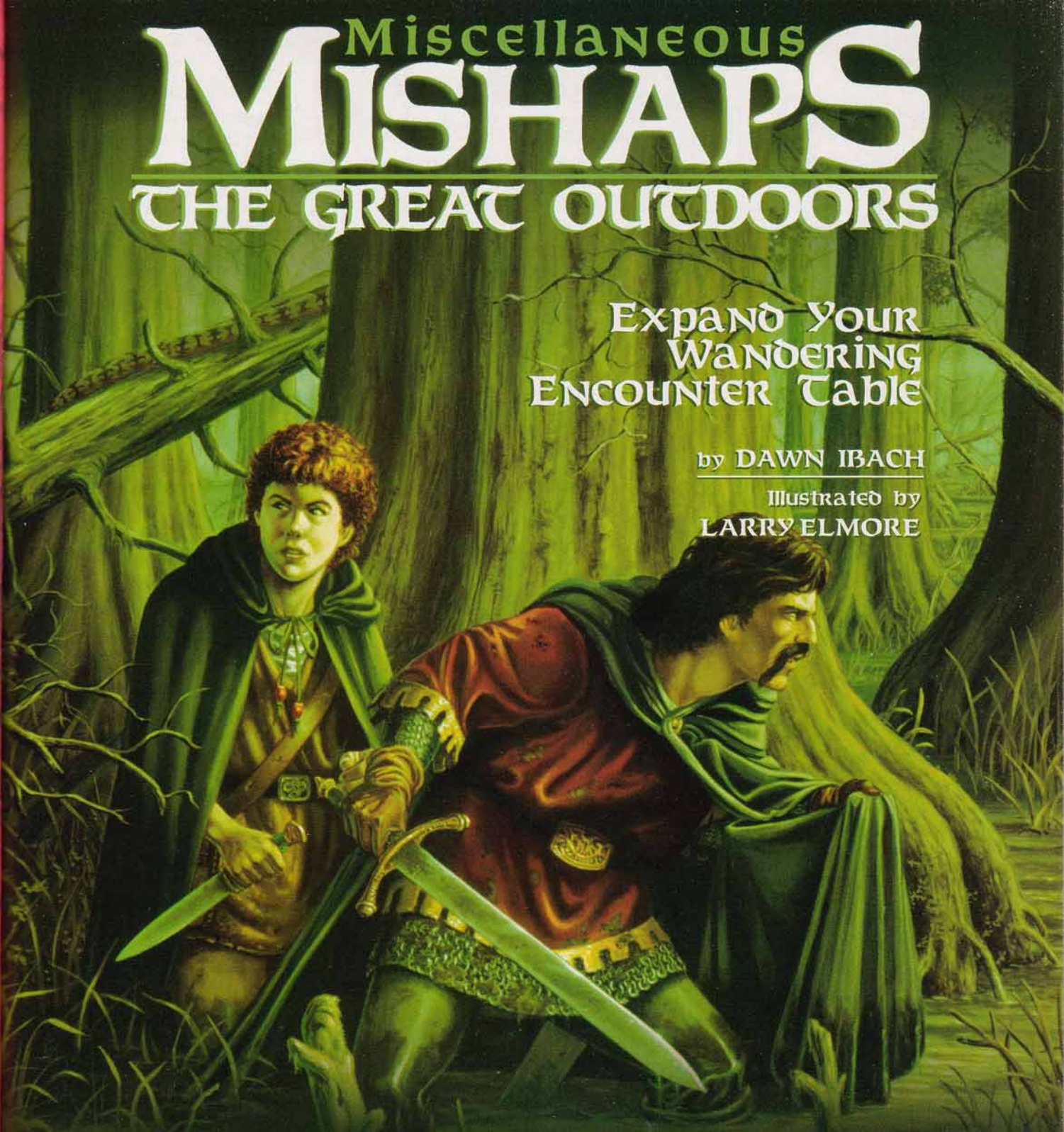
Miscellaneous MISHAPS

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Expand Your Wandering Encounter Table

by DAWN IBACH

Illustrated by LARRY ELMORE



Your player characters must walk through miles of forest, hills, and mountains. Besides the occasional wandering monster, how do you, as a good Dungeon Master, enliven the trip without distracting the PCs from their goal, boring them, or taking up too much time?

Spice up your wandering encounter tables by adding mishaps and oddities. You can base entire encounters on the oddities or just place them in the adventure at random to make players curious or suspicious. Simply use the following tables instead of your normal wandering encounter rolls.

Table 1: Random Encounters*

1d20

1–8	Common Annoyance (see **Table 2**).
9–10	Odd Find I (see **Table 3**)
11–12	Odd Find II (see **Table 4**)
13–16	Nothing special.
17–20	Creature appropriate to terrain (roll on the random encounter table from the adventure or setting).

* Add 1 to the die roll when in forest or hills; add 2 in mountains or jungle; add 3 in swamps.

Table 2: Common Annoyances

1d20

1	Thorns
2	Ticks*
3	Fleas
4	Lost equipment
5	Equipment strap or wheel breaks
6	Lame mount
7	Mice in backpacks or saddlebags*
8	Bee, wasp, or hornet nest
9	Bird droppings
10	Food spoilage
11	Waterskin leak
12	Gnats
13	Mosquitoes*
14	Raccoon(s) in backpacks
15	Snake(s) in bedroll or tent
16	Rabid animal attack
17	Camp flood
18	Ill mount
19	Poison ivy or sumac
20	Lice

* Mouse droppings, ticks, and mosquitoes are known to transmit diseases.

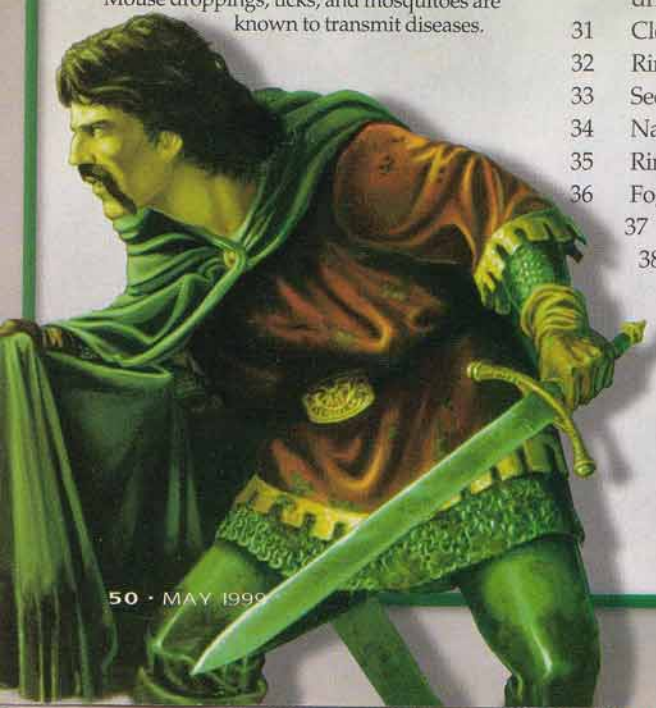


Table 3: Odd Finds I

1d100

01	Hunter's pit trap
02	Drowned animal or monster on riverbank
03	Hunter's snare trap
04	Lookout post
05	Humanoid territory marker
06	Stone obelisk
07	Abandoned mine construction site
08	Humanoid burial site
09	Steel bear trap
10	10–20 yard section of old stone road
11	Deadfall trap
12	Skeleton in a wooden cage suspended from a tree branch
13	Abandoned wagon, 50% empty or full
14	Tree house
15	Tree seat
16	Oddly shaped boulder
17	Half-cut tree with rusted saw
18	Stone or wood totem
19	Burrow, empty or occupied
20	Half-buried statue
21	Archery targets
22	Witch or hedge wizard's hut
23	Abandoned monster nest
24	Rare herb or plant
25	Way station
26	Huge creature skeleton or corpse
27	Dead tree across path
28	Old forest fire site
29	Monster droppings
30	Stone well filled with drinkable water
31	Clearing
32	Ring of towering stones
33	Section of dead trees
34	Natural spring and pond
35	Ring of trees
36	Fog
37	Old campsite
38	Abandoned crop or garden or field
39	Copse of fruit trees
40	Uprooted tree
41	Trapper or hunter or poacher cabin
42	Humanoid or animal or monster carcass
43	Humanoid or monster graveyard
44	Dried out hunter's blind
45	Humanoid or animal or monster skeleton
46	Steam vent
47	Natural or set forest fire
48	Common grave site
49	Abandoned tent(s)
50	Tribal holy site
51	Battle site
52	Forgotten cemetery
53	Combat site remains
54	Circle of mushrooms
55	Pond
56	Rot infested tree(s)
57	Stream
58	Mud or tar pit
59	Marshy ground
60	Mineral spring
61	Ridge
62	Berry bush(es)
63	Land drop off
64	Perfect fishing spot
65	Cave carved as monstrous mouth
66	Wildflower patch
67	Foot bridge
68	Unmarked grave
69	Bridge of piled stones
70	Rowboat or canoe
71	Avalanche-blocked trail
72	Waterfall
73	Small lake
74	Rope bridge, cut or uncut
75	Petrified woodsman or deer
76	Occupied trap
77	Sprung trap
78	Tree covered with many silent crows
79	Camp fire with roasting rabbit(s)
80	Beginnings of log cabin construction
81	Litter or trash
82	Outdoor altar
83	Horse with saddle, grazing
84	Pit trap filled with water
85	Noose with occupant
86	Castle foundation with moat, abandoned
87	Giant wooden shield

88 Shattered boat hull
89 Stumps near burned down cabin
90 Polluted pond
91 Abandoned bandit hideout
92 Abandoned watch or signal tower
93 Perfect ambush site
94 Discarded monster eggs
95 Barrow, looted
96 Wooden palisade fence
97 Tree decorated with humanoid skulls
98 Domestic animal, alone
99 Cursed item, discarded or as trap
00 Roll twice and combine, if possible

Table 4: Odd Finds II

1d100

01 Beaver dam
02 Dried up stream or river bed
03 Stone battle monument, any race
04 Frequently used campsite
05 Burned down building or village
06 Dried up well
07 Animal lair with dead occupant(s)
08 Monster lair with dead occupant(s)
09 Fire pit with stacked wood
10 Fire pit with burnt boar covered with leaves
11 Adventurer's wagon with mules and supplies
12 Lost or injured or dying familiar
13 Campsite with tun of poor wine nearby
14 Campsite with tun of poisoned or drugged wine
15 Bush with berries out of season
16 Blueberry bush with poisonous berries
17 Carnivorous raspberry bush
18 Tree split in half
19 Net trap
20 Stack of skeletons
21 Pyramid of skulls
22 Bones stuck in ground creating trail signs
23 Bag of spell components
24 Animal skull collection
25 Humanoid skull collection
26 Ranger trail signs
27 Secret organization's trail signs
28 Skeleton(s) crucified on tree
29 Defiled outdoor altar
30 Single burned tree
31 Oak tree surrounded by kindling
32 Hunter's noose trap
33 Man trap
34 Ring of seashells
35 Tree with out-of-season leaves
36 Backpack with supplies
37 Cliff or ridge with rope and pitons
38 Monster or humanoid tracks, old or new
39 Natural animal tracks, old or new
40 Barely buried chest with valuables
41 Unburied chest , empty
42 Oak tree with mistletoe
43 Tree struck by lightning
44 Abandoned creature catacombs
45 Baby left to the elements
46 Line of heads on pikes
47 Fishing hole with small dock
48 Lost child of any race
49 Initials on tree, any language
50 Iron head of battering ram, rusted
51 Catapult, operational or not
52 Sculpted shrubbery
53 Personal shrine
54 Underground bolt-hole
55 Underground laboratory
56 Bear skeleton in steel trap
57 Huge hollow tree
58 Line of stones making an X on ground
59 Healer's bag
60 Underground torture chambers
61 Skeleton with crushed hip
62 Animal out of its natural terrain
63 Pond with bubbles around edge
64 Barge in dried up river bed
65 Bush decorated with flower garlands
66 Deer followed by pack of wolves
67 Easel, paints, and half-done painting
68 Tree decorated with weapons
69 Tree decorated with feathers, animal bones, and shiny rocks
70 Poisoned pond
71 Pile of large wood shavings
72 Carved or sculpted living tree
73 Rusted iron cage, humanoid size
74 Several slave or prison wagons, torn open
75 Giant-sized fire pit and spit
76 Tree stump or rock carved like a throne
77 Meteorite
78 Skeleton in uniform with message pouch
79 Fruit-bearing treant
80 Maple trees with spouts and buckets, in fall, with scars during other seasons
81 Sinkhole
82 Coat of arms banner on pole
83 Hidden cache of clothing and weapons
84 Kite in a tree
85 Ring of boulders
86 Large unwieldy telescope in clearing
87 Salt water lake or pond
88 Garbage dump site
89 Dried up lake with aquatic village ruins
90 Wood alcohol still
91 Druid grove
92 Splash of dried blood from an aerial battle
93 Vineyard
94 Site of woodland creatures celebration, current or remains
95 Tree riddled with dagger holes
96 Large iron cauldron with fire remains
97 Salt lick
98 Rainbow
99 Sapling forest
00 Four-leaf clover

illustrated by Russell Walks

Fiction by
Elaine Cunningham

STOLEN DREAMS

The bustle of an arriving caravan filled the courtyard of the Friendly Arms tavern. Inside the tavern's great hall, a tiny brown woman—short even by the standards of the gnomes who ran the fortified travelers' rest—scrambled onto one of the tables and clapped her small hands for attention.

"Caravan from Waterdeep coming through! Step lively, now." Her voice boomed through the vast room, surprising in its depth and resonance. In response, a small army of gnomes began to scurry about in frenzied last-moment preparation, like roaches scattering before the light of an unexpected lantern.

Or so they seemed to Sophie. She'd lived among these small folk for all of her twenty-odd years, and never had she been so heartily sick of them as she was this night. Although employed as a serving wench and restrained by law from leaving this place, she dreamed of grander folk, better places, and opportunities only the wide world could offer. Some quirk of fate had left her a foundling babe, and a second, darker turn had landed her on the doorstep of gnomes who insisted that she stay until she worked off the cost of her early keep.

The other girls—there were seven of them—had similar tales. Indentured servants all, they occasionally bemoaned their ill luck but seemed content to accept their fate. Not Sophie. Let other fools toss their coins into the alms pots at Tymora's temples and pray for Lady Fortune's favor: Sophie had noticed that the harder she worked, the better her luck seemed to be. Tonight she would work very hard indeed.

She wiped her hands on her apron and tugged at the hem of her tightly laced bodice, pulling the crimson garment as low as she dared. It was easier to steal from the travelers who frequented the Friendly Arms once their attention was fixed upon something interesting.

"Not too interesting," cautioned a gruff voice behind her. "And not too friendly, neither."

Sophie hissed a sigh from between gritted teeth and turned to glare down at the gnome who called himself her guardian and employer. Her jailer, more like it!

Bentley Mirrorshade was stout, brown-skinned, and much weathered by the passing of years and the use of magic. To Sophie's eyes, he had little in common with the magic-users who passed through on their way to better places. Not for him the embroidered spell bags, the studied grace of gesture, and the trained resonance of tone. No fine robes draped his squat form, and no potions of longevity smoothed the wrinkles that seamed and whorled his face like fine-grained wood. Indeed, except for the rosy hue of his bulbous nose and the slightly darker crimson of his jerkin, he might well have been carved from wood.

"My fingers tingle," she informed him. "I can't smell the stew over the scent of money. Listen to the din out there! And see the fine weapons on that merchant's guards? Tonight is the night. I feel it!"

The gnome sighed. He had long ago become resigned to the larcenous streak in Sophie's nature and had worked out a compromise that served both his reputation and her sanity. But he could not resist wagging a stubby brown finger in admonition. "Remember the Mirrorshade Cipher, wench."

Sophie rolled her eyes and held her hands out to her sides, palms up, pantomiming a scale see-sawing in a fruitless quest for balance. "The treasure worth keeping, the risk worth taking," she recited in a mocking singsong. "But what risk could there be this night? Waterdeep merchants are fat and smug and lazy."

"There are wizards in Waterdeep," the gnome reminded her. "Play your games if you must, but pick your playmates with care. Can't have you caught lifting some silly trifle. That sort of thing ruins an inn's name. What would you be without the Friendly Arms?"

Sophie tossed her head. "Free," she retorted.

Bentley Mirrorshade sent her a look that was both dour and long suffering. He fell silent as a small group of the travelers came into the hall, and his small, shrewd blue eyes scrutinized each one in turn.

As she waited the gnome's verdict, Sophie reached into her pocket for a handful of long, thin leather thongs. One of her favorite tasks was peace-binding the left thumb of visiting mages to their belts. On the surface of things, it was a foolish convention—most spells could be cast one-handed—but it had its purposes. For one thing, it left the visiting magic-users smug, confident in their assumption that their gnomish hosts were ignorant of magic and awed by those who practiced it. Bentley Mirrorshade was in truth a highly skilled illusionist, but he was not above using simple, mundane ploys to distract the eye and create a desired effect. Peace-binding also gave Sophie a decided edge. The pressure of the thong, the awkward position—this was enough to nudge the senses off balance. Men thus distracted were less likely to notice a sudden lightening of their purses.

"This caravan carries more magic-users than a bugbear has ticks," the gnome concluded grimly. "Take care of that fat man

wearing purple. The woman in leather armor. Those two over there, the young skinny ones tripping over their robes. And be looking for a tall elf with silver hair. When he comes in, bind him tight, but leave him be." A new swirl of wind drew the gnome's gaze back to the door, and he sucked in a sharp, startled breath. "I'll be a short-tailed kobold," he cursed softly. "Trouble follows that one, but why did he have to darken my door?"

Sophie followed the line of his gaze, and her eyes lit up with pure avarice. The newcomer handing his coat to the doorgnome was the most promising pigeon she'd seen in a month of tendays. A young man, tall, fair and more splendidly jeweled and attired than any sensible traveler would dare. He wore two fine swords, which he handed to the gnomes who collected weapons at the door. Sophie slid a measuring eye over him. A nobleman, judging from the heraldic crest embroidered onto one shoulder of his tabard and the easy, innate arrogance of his stance and manner. The green leather bag at his belt was too big to lift without risk, but the coin purse hanging over his left hip, the small silver knife tucked into his boot, his emerald pendant—they were as good as hers.

Sophie pushed past the gnome, ignoring his protests as she eased her way through the growing crowd. With practiced calculation, she stepped into the path of a thick-bodied merchant. They collided, and she bounced off him and all but fell into the young nobleman's arms.

She pulled away with a laughing apology, running her hands through her abundant dark hair as if to smooth it into place. It was an artful move, one she'd practiced and perfected—one that lifted her bosom to impressive heights and drew an admirer's eyes slowly up to her equally remarkable face.

"And what can I get you, my lord?" she said meaningfully.

The nobleman took note of her performance but did not seem inclined to applaud. "Killed, most likely," he said mildly. "Or severely wounded at the very least."

Her puzzled look earned her nothing but a smile and a request for expensive wine. A cold fish, this one! Sophie took off in a huff with his coin purse tucked into her pocket. When Bentley sent her back a few moments later to peace-bind the nobleman, she tightened the thong more tightly than necessity demanded.

The night wore on without further incident. Sophie collected coins, bangles, even a few travel cups and table knives. The cups and knives would be easily returned to their owners when the night's sport was through, explained as a wench's error in clearing the tables. The other things would be more difficult, but only slightly so. Sophie was as adept at returning the stolen items as she was in acquiring them. And return them she would. So far, she had collected nothing worth keeping. According to Bentley, never had she done so.

It was beginning to dawn on Sophie that, as far as Bentley Mirrorshade was concerned, she would never find a treasure whose value outweighed the risk. They were playing a game that only one could win, and the winner was the gnome who made the rules. If she desired to be completely honest, Sophie would have to admit that she'd realized the truth of Bentley's ploy long ago. She had pretended otherwise, for the game amused her and gave her an opportunity to hone her skills. More importantly, it allowed her to hope that someday she could win free of this place.

But it was all false, of course—one of Bentley's illusions, no more convincing than the little farce of peace-binding.

Her disgruntlement grew as the night wore on. Other than the coin purse she'd lifted from the young nobleman, most of her "treasure" was of little worth. Most of the knives were lead or bone, the bracers and bangles either brass or copper, devoid of either valuable carving or precious stone. This caravan was from Waterdeep! Where were the gems, the gold, and silver?

A glint of lamplight on silver—at last!—drew her eye to the door. There stood a tall, slender Moon elf, frowning slightly as he unburdened himself of weapons. Surely this was the elf of whom Bentley had spoken. A small, delighted smile curved Sophie's lips as her appraising eyes settled upon the elf's belt. Though he had given up a half dozen weapons, he was permitted to carry such tools as gentlemen used at table, as well as small items deemed too valuable to entrust to another. The elf retained several such items, including a dagger fashioned of silvery metal the same hue as the elf's hair—a color so pale it was nearly white. That marked it as elven steel, priceless even without the elaborate carving and jewels that graced the hilt.

Revelation jolted Sophie. This was it! This had to be the treasure that out-measured the risk. The elf carried so many fine things that he would not miss that single small knife. Surely Bentley would acknowledge this and concede that the game they played had at last been won! She could buy free of this place tonight!

A wave of exultation swept through her, quickly chased by a sense of betrayal and then cold, curious rage. Bentley knew. Of course he did, and that was why he warned her clear of this elf.

Why else? Bentley Mirrorshade was a gnome of his word. Once the priceless dagger was hers, the gnome would have no choice but to honor the bargain they'd made years ago, and that would mean the loss of his most popular tavern wench.

Sophie tamped down her wrath and forced an inviting smile onto her face. She elbowed one of her fellow wenches aside and strolled over to the silver-haired elf.

"And what can I get you, my lord?" she purred as her fingers reached toward freedom.

❖❖❖

Bentley Mirrorshade stared with horror at the glittering hoard laid out before him. Several long moments passed before he lifted his eyes to Sophie's face. The depth of emotion in them set her back on her heels, for she could not begin to fathom the reason for the mingled sorrow and fear in the gnome's small

blue eyes. She had expected either the anger or the resignation of a gambler who knew himself beaten.

"What have you done, girl?" he said in a faint voice.

Sophie tossed her dark head. "I've bought my way free, is what I've done! You can't claim that dagger isn't worth the risk of taking it."

A strange, ironic little smile twisted the gnome's lips. "Depends upon how much value you give your life. That dagger belongs to Elaith Craulnober. He's a rogue elf, and not a forgiving sort. They say not a man or woman crosses him and lives."

"So? They say many things."

Bentley gave her a long, somber look. "Do you remember Hannilee Whistlewren?"

It took Sophie a moment to attach the name to the remembered image of a small, rosily smiling face. "The halfling wench. She worked as a laundress for a moon or two, then left with the caravan bound for Lurien."

"That's the tale we put about. Maybe you also remember the fouled well."

That she recalled instantly. For months she and the other girls had had to carry heavy buckets from the spring just outside the fortress walls. Suddenly the gnome's meaning grew clear. "The halfling was killed and tossed into the well?"

"Pieces of her came up in the bucket," Bentley agreed grimly. "Small pieces."

Some of the gnome's fear began to edge into Sophie's heart. "Elaith Craulnober?"

"That'd be my guess. Last thing Hannilee did, far as we could figure, was bring fresh linens to the elf's room. Maybe her fingers were a mite sticky. Never could find cause to accuse him, but the tale sings in tune with many another I've heard."

Sophie's bright hopes faded. "I'll return the dagger at once. He'll never know."

"No." Bentley spoke quietly, but emphatically. "I'll deal with this. It could mean your life if you were caught with the dagger—and mine if I keep it."

It did not take Sophie long to weigh these options. "Have it your way, then." She began to gather up the other treasures. It would take her most of the evening to return them to their unwitting owners.

But by the time she'd tied the third coin bag back in place, Sophie began to reconsider the gnome's offer. It was not like Bentley to be so solemn—usually the gnome was all grit and bluster. Perhaps her first instinct had hit the mark after all—perhaps she had finally found the item valuable enough to offset the risk involved.

There was one sure way to find out, and it wasn't from the treacherous, slave-driving gnome. Not directly, that is.

Sophie deftly lifted the keys from Bentley's pocket and slipped away from the tavern to the low-ceiling chamber that served as his workroom. The lying little troll was as adept at creating magical illusions as he was at shaping the truth into whatever form suited his purpose. Somewhere among the jumble of pots and vials and powders would be something useful.

A few moments later, Sophie strode awkwardly toward the stables, trying to school the swish from her hips and add length to her stride. Thanks to a bottle of vile-tasting potion, she wore the form of a burly, bearded mercenary who served as Elaith Craulnober's second in command. It would not do to be seen mincing about.

She found a tall, thin lad in the first stall, busily grooming a dappled mare. "May the gods save me from tripping over these gnomes, because they're too stupid to get out of the way," she said, wincing at the bluff, deep sound that emerged from her throat.

The boy's only response was an indifferent shrug, but Sophie pressed on. "One of them tried to buy Craulnober's dagger for five hundred gold. The elf turned him down, of course. What's the thing worth, do you think?"

The gloved hand stilled, and the lad lifted his gaze to Sophie's face. "Lord Craulnober's business is his own. Not mine, and I daresay not yours."

The voice was low, the face deeply shadowed by the hood of the rough cape, but Sophie saw what was there to see. This was no lad. A female, and judging from the size and tilt and color of those eyes—blue as sapphires, and flecked with gold—she was probably not entirely human. A prickle of mingled fear and distaste shimmered through her. She quickly covered her reaction with a boisterous laugh and a comrade's slap on the shoulder.

"Well said, lad! You passed the test, and I'll be telling the elf so later this eve. He's got his eye on you for better things, you know."

"Cap'n?"

A whip-thin man with a scarred cheek had edged closer during this exchange. The tentative, inquiring note in his voice suggested that Sophie had blundered. She'd gambled that this elfwoman's true identity was secret from the rest of the caravan. Apparently she'd lost that wager. She gave the newcomer a sheepish grin and a shrug.

"It took three tankards to wash the taste of road dust from my mouth." She raised one hand to her temples. "Scarce can remember my own name, much less hers. The elf wench isn't much for gossip, is she?"

"No cap'n," the man agreed.

"And here I could use some company. Let me buy you a drink, and you can remind me why we're here," Sophie said with what she hoped was a wry, self-mocking grin.

The man's eyes widened and then shone with pleasure at what was apparently an unaccustomed honor.

It took Sophie the better part of an hour and several of the coins she'd taken from the fair-haired nobleman, but finally the scrawny mercenary was getting around to the part of the story that was worth hearing. Worth the risk of stealing a shapeshifting potion, worth the risk of wearing a borrowed form, the risk that her friend Belle might not keep the real

captain busy until Sophie's task was done.

Worth any risk.

Sophie gestured for another round and edged the full tankard closer to her informer. The thin man was weaving now, wearing the beatific smile of one who totters on the brink between sentience and sleep.

"This wench we're looking for," she prompted. "How are we to know her?"

The mercenary turned a stare of bleary-eyed puzzlement upon her, but he obediently repeated what he thought his "captain" should know. "Got a mark on her thigh." He dipped an unsteady finger into the trencher and used a bit of gravy to draw three lines on the table. "We're to work our way through the wenches, careful like, until we find her."

Sophie stared at the familiar mark. "A birthmark."

He snorted. "Something like. The mother cut that onto her baby's thigh so she'd know the brat if ever she had cause to look for her. A piece of work, that woman."

That woman. Her mother. For a moment, Sophie conjured a wistful image of a pleasant home, the comfort of being the pampered daughter of a human household, not the servant of a gnome clan. The birthmark was nothing—a bit of unremembered pain. It was the potential that interested Sophie.

"What cause does she have to be looking for the wench now?'

"Cause enough! Things down Tethyr way got turned boots over britches. Time was, everyone with a drop of royal blood was butchered like a hog."

Royal blood! Hers?

The man started to tilt slowly to one side. Sophie grabbed a handful of hair and hauled him upright. "And now?" she prompted.

"Some folks still see things that way. Some don't." He paused for an enormous yawn. "Craulnober took bids from both sides. We get the wench and sell her to whoever comes up with the best price."

Sophie had heard enough. She released her informer and fled the great hall. Behind her the thin man snored contentedly, his scarred cheek pillowed on a half loaf of bread. In the kitchen alley she took a second vial from her sleeve and drained it, then leaned both hands on the wall for support as the waves of magic swept through her, reversing the illusion and returning her to herself.

No, not herself. At least, not Sophie the tavern wench. Not that, never again. If the mercenary's tale was true, Sophie no longer existed—had never existed! And if this was the secret Bentley Mirrorshade hoarded, his theft was far greater than anything she had managed in her years of honing her thieving skills. He had stolen her heritage, her birthright, her dreams!

She found the gnome in the kitchen, standing over a vast kettle and tasting soup from a large wooden spoon. "Is it true?" she demanded.

Bentley held her gaze for a moment. He put down the spoon and turned toward the back door, gesturing for her to follow. He did not ask her what she meant. To Sophie, that was as good as an admission. With difficulty she held her tongue until they reached the back alley.

"How could you do this?" she said in a low furious voice. "You stole my freedom, my future. My name!"

The gnome heaved a sigh. "Sophie—"

"Not Sophie! Never that again!" She threw back her shoulders. "I am the daughter of Lucia Thione, a noblewoman of Tethyr with ties to the exiled royal family. Did my mother give me a name?"

"Isabeau," the gnome said faintly. "It's a lovely name she gave you. More than that, she gave you life. Left you here in safe fosterage in a time when such bloodlines meant death. In some circles, it still does. The high bidder gets you, and your fate is not something the elf bothers himself over."

This agreed with the tale Sophie—no, Isabeau—had already heard. Fury and terror battled for supremacy in her heart. "You planned to collect, I suppose. No wonder you warned me away from the elf!"

"Mind your tongue, wench! I made an oath to keep you safe, and that I've done for twenty years. I'd have done it another twenty if you weren't too mule-headed to listen." Bentley's ire passed quickly, and he sighed again. "There's maybe three or four treasures that're worth keeping and never mind the risk. A baby's life is one. Now that you're found out, there's no safety for you here. You'll have to leave."

"Just like that?" she demanded. All her life she had waited for this moment. Why did it seem less a triumph than a banishment?

He sent her a reproachful look. "What do you take me for? I'm not turning you out to fend for yourself. You're to leave the fortress and hide at my fishing camp. When it's safe, I'll send for you and get you set up in a new place, with a new name."

"Not my name," she said bitterly. "I just learned it, and I have to give it up?"

The gnome folded his arms. "Maybe, but you'll be keeping your skin. Don't look upon that lightly. There's too many in Tethyr that would be happy to nail it to the wall. If you listen to me, maybe Elaith Craulnober won't have a chance to peel it off you with that there dagger."

A shiver passed through her. "Very well," she said coldly. "Tell me what I have to do."

❖❖❖

The rest of the night passed swiftly. Excitement and fear carried Sophie along, quickened her steps as she hurried along the faint path that cut through the forest. Never had she been this far from the fortress, and the sheer novelty of it thrilled her. By sunrise, however, the thrill was long gone. Dew moistened the ferns and brush, dampening her skirts until they clung to her legs and left her shaking with chill. By the time she reached the tiny cabin, she was ready to do precisely what the gnome had told her to do: rest and wait until he could send for her.

That docile mood lasted for perhaps an hour, while she built a fire from wood piled outside the hut and boiled water for tea. Her anger grew as warmth and strength returned to her limbs. How dared Bentley Mirrorshade use her as a servant! All those years of waiting tables, enduring the limp jests and questing hands of the tavern's patrons. She was a lady, not a common wench! The men she admitted to her bed should have been lords, not the motley assortment of lovers she had taken over the years. None had been worth her time. None! Well, perhaps the minstrel who had lingered at the Friendly Arms through the waning and waxing of two moons, sharing her bed and tutoring her in the finer arts of thievery. He was worthwhile—not just for the training, but also for the collection of picks and knives she had stolen from him on the day of his departure.

The thought of this coup still brought a smile to her lips. But her smile quickly faded as she considered her loss. Her hidden heritage was the most egregious of thefts! Her dreams of wealth, position, society—all stolen by a parcel of gnomes.

Not once, but twice stolen. Bentley had sent her away to save her life. But the risk of being Isabeau Thione was nothing compared to the gain. Sophie gathered up her travel pack and stormed out of the cabin. She slammed the door shut and kicked it for good measure.

"I will find a way to reclaim my heritage," she vowed grimly. "And my first act as Lady Thione will be to avenge my stolen dreams! Bentley Mirrorshade will pay for what he has done to me. I'll kill the little wretch!"

"Too late," said a low, musical voice behind her.

Sophie whirled, her eyes wide and one hand clutching at her throat. A tall, thin figure slipped into the small clearing. It was the elfwoman from the stables, and she moved toward Sophie with the unmistakable grace of a warrior.

Sophie took an involuntary step back and bumped into the cabin. Her gaze darted about the clearing for escape and saw none. The only possible weapon was the deadfall wood piled up for kindling. But Sophie would fight with tooth and nail, if it came to that, to keep her day-old freedom.

She threw back her head and glared a challenge at the elfwoman. "You're working for that elf, Elaith. He sent you after me. Well, I'm not coming with you."

"Wrong, and wrong twice again." The elfwoman lowered her hood, revealing a tumble of black curls and a delicate face dominated by large, gold-flecked blue eyes. "My name is Arilyn Moonblade. I work for the Harpers, who have an interest in Tethyr's future and, therefore, in yours."

Sophie's eyes narrowed. "I don't believe you. You elves always stand together."

"I am half-elven," Arilyn said evenly, "and Elaith Craulnober is in no position to offer any threat."

"Lies!" Sophie drove to one side and came up with a stout limb in her hands. Lofting it like a club, she ran at the half-elf.

Annoyance flickered over her opponent's face. The half-elf dropped one hand to the hilt of her sword but otherwise stood her ground.

Sophie brought her club down with skull-splitting force and deadly intent.

The stick thudded dully into the packed earth of the clearing floor. Sophie found herself off balance and bent low by the force of her blow. She quick-stepped in an attempt to keep her balance. And she would have, if that wretched half-elf hadn't kicked her in the rump.

She hit the ground face down and hard, but she didn't lose her grip on her club. Agile as a cat, she rolled onto her back and lunged to her feet, swinging as she went.

Arilyn sidestepped another blow and caught Sophie's flailing wrist. Sophie struggled and cursed and slapped wildly with her free hand until the half-elf captured that one, as well. Nearly frantic now, Sophie kicked the half-elf in the shin, hard, and aimed another kick at her knee.

But again the warrior was too quick for her. Arilyn accepted the first blow and saw the second one coming. A quick twist of her body took her beyond reach of Sophie's vicious kick. She kept turning, holding Sophie's wrists and forcing her to turn as well. When they were back to back, Arilyn bent over suddenly.

The world spun as Sophie flipped over. She hit the ground, stumbled, and dropped to her knees. Dark, furious resolve filled her and she rose unsteadily to her feet. With one hand she hiked up her skirt, and with the other she snatched the knife she kept sheathed to her thigh. Holding it high and shrieking like a fiend, she rushed at the half-elf.

Lightning flashed, or so it seemed. The half-elf drew her sword so fast that the hiss of drawn steel blended with the clash of weapons. Sophie jolted to a stop, stunned by the impact of the blow. She and Arylin stood nearly toe to toe, and Sophie saw her own resolve mirrored in those elven eyes.

"What do you want?" she panted out.

"I told you. I'm supposed to take you to safety."

Sophie wretched her knife free and danced back. "You think you're the first?" she said grimly. "I've tried to leave the fortress before, and I've been delivered back to the gnomes by people who need the Friendly Arms and Mirrorshade's sufferance. Not this time."

As she spoke, she hooked her toe under her fallen club. With a quick kick she tossed it into the air. To her enormous surprise, she caught it. Clutching it in a two-handed grasp, she began to circle her opponent.

The half-elf turned with her, sword held in guard position. But there was exasperation on her face—the expression of a tutor enduring a student's tantrum. "Are you finished?"

"You first," Sophie said in a voice dripping with venom.

She came on with a flurry of wild blows, shrieking and kicking and flailing. She was beyond reason, beyond anything but a fury fueled by years of frustration and the desperation to regain her stolen dreams.

Her frenzy ended in an explosion of pain that filled her mind with sizzles of crimson fire and then blinding white light. When the light receded and vision returned, Sophie realized that she was sitting on the ground. Her jaw ached and

throbbed. She raised one hand and wiggled it experimentally, then she cast a baleful look up at her tormenter.

The half-elf glared at her. "Don't move. It would have been a lot easier to kill you than to keep you alive. You're not worth that much trouble twice."

Sophie acknowledged that this was simple statement of fact. She was alive at the half-elf's sufferance. But for what purpose? The gnome's warning came back to Sophie: many were the factions in her native Tethyr who sought out those with even a drop of royal blood. Few of them wished her well.

"Who are you working for, if not the elf?" she ventured.

"I told you. The Harpers want you alive, and you can believe me when I say that Elaith Craulnober is in no position to harm you. At the moment he's in the dungeons under the Friendly Arms, held for the murder of Bentley Mirrorshade."

That seemed impossible. Bentley Mirrorshade was an infuriating, deceitful thief who had all but imprisoned her, but he was still all the family she had ever known.

"You're lying!"

The half-elf folded her arms and gave Sophie a long, speculative look. "Elaith is in the dungeon, and the gnomes believe that he killed Bentley. I saw the body. What part are you having trouble with?"

It was true, then. Bentley had been right about the dagger after all—the risk of keeping it had been too great. But that realization brought no remorse to Sophie's heart, and no gratitude. The gnome had stolen her life and forfeited his own. There was a certain justice in his fate, and Sophie celebrated it with a short, bitter laugh.

This seemed to anger the half-elf. "The gnome was your guardian. You owe him your life many times over. This is the regard you show him?"

The woman shrugged. "Have you never heard of the Mirrorshade Cipher?"

"You can tell me about it on the way." The half-elf took a step toward her.

Sophie shrunk back. "I'm not returning to the Friendly Arms. I won't!"

"Who's arguing? I'm supposed to see you safely to Waterdeep."

She considered the gnome's warnings, and the words of the scarred mercenary. There was danger in Tethyr. Waterdeep would be safer, but would it be much of an improvement?

"And what awaits me there?" she said bitterly. "Another tavern? More years of working off my debt to you and your Harpers?"

Arilyn hissed out an impatient sigh. "You will be introduced into society as the daughter of Lady Lucia Thione. You will have possession of your mother's estate and fortune. And as long as you stay out of trouble, you need have nothing more to do with the Harpers. It's the best offer you're likely to get. I advise you to take it without further argument. There are limits to my patience."

Sophie stared up at the half-elf for a long moment, searching for any sign of deception. Arilyn's face spoke of distaste for the task but determination to see her duty through. A smile began to dawn on Sophie's face. No. Isabeau's face.

She held out her hand and lifted her chin to an imperious angle. "Help me rise," she said haughtily.

This seemed to amuse the half-elf. She nodded approvingly. "Good idea. It'll take a lot of practice to make a noblewoman out of you. Might as well start now."

Isabeau rose to her feet unaided and brushed off her skirts with as much dignity as she could muster. "Let's be off," she ordered.

The half-elf shrugged and led the way into the trees, where a pair of horses waited. They rode in silence until the sun was high. Isabeau passed the time counting her new fortune, picturing herself living in splendor, thinking about the noblemen she would dazzle with her charm and beauty. She would start with the man who had ignored her the night before. He had scorned the offer of a tavern wench, but surely he would not resist Lady Isabeau Thione! Already her life at the Friendly Arms seemed a distant thing, a rapidly fading dream.

"Well, what is it?"

The words popped Isabeau's glittering fancy and jerked her rudely into the present moment. She focused with difficulty on the half-elf's face.

"The Mirrorshade Cipher," Arilyn prompted. "Whatever it was that enabled you to shrug aside news of your guardian's death."

Isabeau shrugged again. "The treasure worth keeping, the risk worth taking. Bentley Mirrorshade said those words often enough. He lived by them, and it's only fitting that he died by them."

"I'm not following," Arilyn said, in a tone that indicated she didn't expect to like the explanation.

"It's simple enough, wench." Ah, but it felt good to say such words, rather than to hear them! "I am Lady Isabeau Thione. I have title, wealth, a house of my own. A position in Waterdeep society. This is the treasure that Bentley kept from me. So great a treasure entails great risk. He took that risk, and the loss is his. It is right and fitting."

The half-elf studied her for a moment, then she shook her head. "You should do well in Waterdeep," she said coldly.

"I intend to," Isabeau said softly. "I intend to do very well indeed."

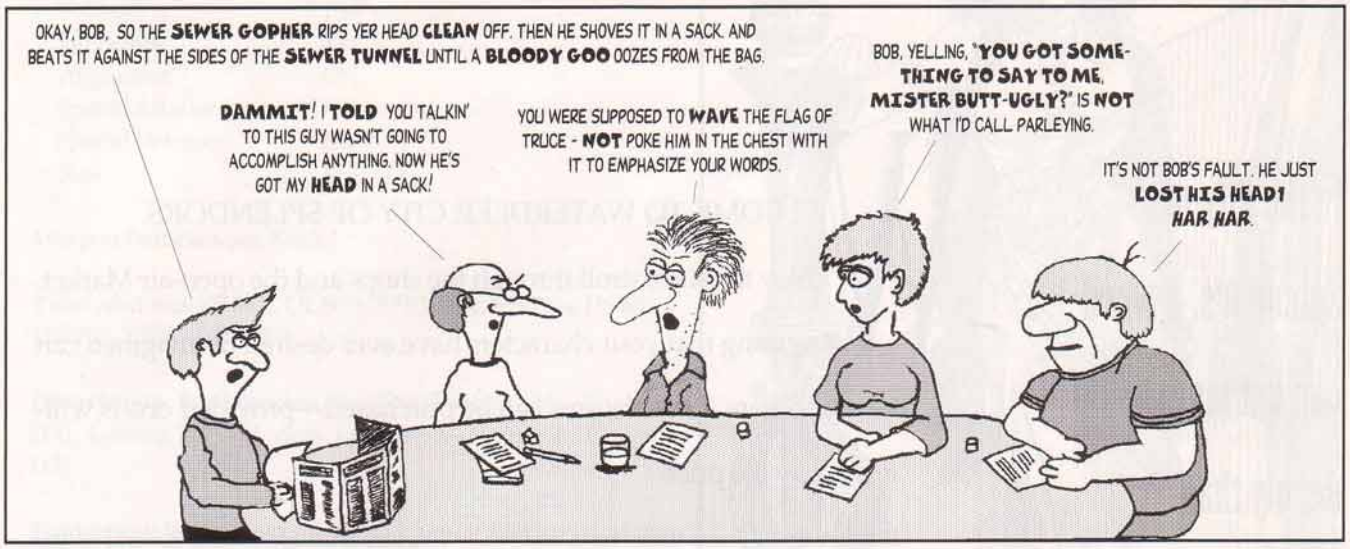
The Dream Spheres *is the last "elf" book on Elaine Cunningham's near horizon. She has been advised to write about humans for a change. This will be a challenge; she knows so little about them.*

Knights of the Dinner Table™

IS A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

WHY HAVEN'T YOU SUBSCRIBED YET??

NOW EXPANDED TO 40 PAGES!!!


OKAY, BOB, SO THE SEWER GOPHER RIPS YER HEAD CLEAN OFF. THEN HE SHOVES IT IN A SACK. AND BEATS IT AGAINST THE SIDES OF THE SEWER TUNNEL UNTIL A BLOODY GOO OOZES FROM THE BAG.
DAMMIT! I TOLD YOU TALKIN' TO THIS GUY WASN'T GOING TO ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING. NOW HE'S GOT MY HEAD IN A SACK!
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO WAVE THE FLAG OF TRUCE - NOT POKE HIM IN THE CHEST WITH IT TO EMPHASIZE YOUR WORDS.
BOB, YELLING, "YOU GOT SOME-THING TO SAY TO ME, MISTER BUTT-UGLY?" IS NOT WHAT I'D CALL PARLEYING.
IT'S NOT BOB'S FAULT. HE JUST LOST HIS HEAD! HAR HAR.

IN ADDITION TO **SEVERAL ORIGINAL STORIES** OF THE ONGOING ADVENTURES OF YOUR FAVORITE CHARACTERS (UNIQUE FROM THOSE APPEARING HERE IN DRAGON™), KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE™ MAGAZINE FEATURES OTHER ARTICLES OF INTEREST TO GAMERS INCLUDING:

- **TALES FROM THE TABLE**: FUNNY STORIES OF LIFE AT THE GAMING TABLE
- **A GAMER'S VIEW OF THE MOVIES**: MOVIE REVIEWS FOR GUYS LIKE US
- **HEARD IT ON THE GAMEVINE**: GAME VINE IS A COLUMN WHERE YOU CAN PUT AN EAR TO THE WALL AND CATCH UP ON WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE GAME INDUSTRY. MONTH TO MONTH WE PLUCK CHOICE BITS OF NEWS, GOSSIP AND RUMOR AND GATHER THEM TOGETHER TO RUN HERE FOR YOUR READING ENJOYMENT.
- **BRIAN'S SMALL PRESS PICKS**: MR. VAN HOOSE REVIEWS THE BEST OF SMALL PRESS PUBLICATIONS.
- **GAMIN' DICK'S BACK ROOM**: A SOUNDING BOARD WHERE GAMERS CAN GIVE THEIR TWO-CENTS' WORTH ON WHATEVER SEEMS TO RILE THEM.
- **PARTING SHOTS**: ONE LAST JAB AT YER FUNNY BONE ON THE WAY OUT THE DOOR

A ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION (12 ISSUES) IS ONLY $32.00!!!

(US $36.00 IN CANADA AND US $50 OVERSEAS)

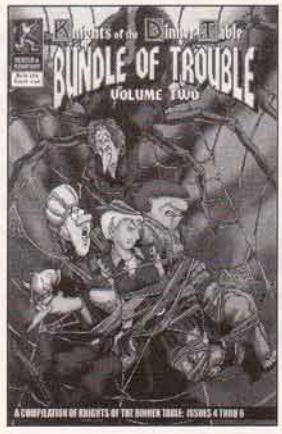
To purchase a subscription or **a sample issue** ($3.50) or Bundle of Trouble #2 ($9.95 + $2 S/H), send a check or money order (made payable to **Kenzer and Company**) to:

Kenzer & Company
Mail Order Fulfillments
2094 Camino a los Cerros, Menlo Park, CA 94025

or fax a valid Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover card number, card type and expiration date to us at **(650) 233-8270** or E-mail the same information to us at **kenzerco@aol.com**

THE WAIT IS OVER!!!

Bundle of Trouble #2 is a complete compilation of KoDT issues #4-#6 plus the extra goodies you expect from us. Available in stores this April or order directly from Kenzer and Company. Only $9.95.



Knights of the Dinner Table™ magazine was voted **Best Professional Games Magazine** by the **YOU** the gaming public!! Thanks!!

E-mail: kenzerco@aol.com

On the Web: http://members.aol.com/relkin/kenzerco.html

© Copyright 1999 Kenzer and Company. All rights reserved.
Legal Notice: The Kenzer and Company Logo, Tales from the Vault, Bundle of Trouble, Knights of the Dinner Table and all prominent characters and likenesses thereof are trademarks of Kenzer and Company.

Dream Spheres

In the City of Splendors, a word can cut more deeply than a knife.

by
Elaine Cunningham

illustrated by
David Day

WELCOME TO WATERDEEP, CITY OF SPLENDORS. Enjoy the sites, stroll through the shops and the open-air Market. Anything that your characters have ever desired or imagined can be found here. Even dreams can be purchased—provided one is willing to pay the price.

But be wary. Villains thrive here, and not all of them are apparent at first glance. In Waterdeep, duels are often fought with words, and rumors can be as devastating as an assassin's blade.

There is enormous diversity among the city's villains. Elaith Craulnober, an elven lord from Evermeet, has carved out an impressive criminal empire. Feldyn Doadolfyn is a commoner from the Moonshaes and the proprietor of the Old Monster Shop. Ulscaleer Anbersyr is a retired Nethlander pirate who now oversees the Fiery Flagon tavern and handles many of the illegal goods smuggled from the underground city of Skullport. There is Maaril, the sinister Mage who presides over the Dragon Tower, and who, rumor claims, was raised and trained in distant Halruaa. The tower and the alleys surrounding it are haunted by beautiful wraiths—all that remain of the Wizard's female apprentices.

Isabeau Thione, Myrna Cassalanter, and Jerome Diloontier are three more villains whose paths cross in *The Dream Spheres*, a new FORGOTTEN REALMS® novel.

In the summer of 1368 DR, life is prosperous but increasingly uneasy. Shipping is the lifeblood of the port city, and more ships than usual have gone missing. Tensions increase among several of the merchant families when an airborne caravan is ambushed in the wilderness west of Silverymoon. It was widely considered to be an inside job, and rumors—and retaliations—are running rampant. The elves of Waterdeep follow these developments closely, and tension between human and elven citizens is increasing. Fortunately, there are other distractions. Prince Haedrak is passing through on his way to Tethyr, hoping to enlist Waterdhavian nobles and fighters to the cause of the Tethyr Reclamation.

Whether a PC is an adventurer, sailor or noble, Waterdhavian by birth or just passing through, this is an exciting and dangerous year to spend in the City of Splendors. Welcome again, and walk carefully.

Elaine Cunningham is the author of The Dream Spheres, *which continues the tale of Arilyn Moonblade and Danilo Thann. She will concede that there are enough stories set in Waterdeep when it is commonly accepted that no more mystery novels should be set in New York City.*

9th-Level Human Thief

Strength:	9
Dexterity:	18
Constitution:	14
Intelligence:	13
Wisdom:	10
Charisma:	17
AC:	7
THAC0:	16
Hit Points:	43
Alignment:	CN
Special Attacks:	Nil
Special Defenses:	Nil
Size:	M (5'3")

Weapon Proficiencies: Knife.

Thief Abilities: PP 85%, OL 60%, F/RT 60%, MS 70%, HS 60%, DN 20%, CS 60%, RL 15%.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Reading/Writing (14), Dancing (18), Gaming (17), Modern Languages—Common, Gnomic (13).

Equipment: Isabeau recently found herself the heiress of the modest fortune her mother, Lady Lucia Thione, was forced to leave behind in Waterdeep. This includes a fine house, gowns, and a modest cache of gold. She has an old but serviceable set of thieving picks and tools that she stole years ago from a professional Thief, a wandering performer who took a liking to the young girl and taught her a few tricks. Isabeau returned the favor and relieved her mentor of his professional tools—a coup that she still contemplates with great pride.

Appearance: Isabeau is about twenty-two years old. She has a slender but generous figure, and she dresses to accentuate her attributes. Tightly cinched bejeweled girdles, low-laced gowns, lavish necklaces that draw the eye—these are wardrobe standards. She has very long, very thick dark hair. Her eyes are large and dark, her nose slightly aquiline, her lips full and voluptuous. Her skin is slightly darker than olive, which reflects her southern heritage (Tethyrian nobility).

Personality: Isabeau is larcenous by nature. She enjoys the challenge of stealing fully as much as she enjoys the actual items. She is ambitious and grasping, and she allows nothing to stand in the way of her desires. Isabeau might accept partners, but she always works in her own best interest. She has a compelling personality and draws admiring eyes even in a room full of beauties. She exploits this asset to its fullest, and she has mastered the art of flirtation.

Background: For the first twenty years of her life, Lady Isabeau Thione was known only as Sophie. A foundling child, she was raised by the gnomes who run The Friendly Arm, a fortified traveler's rest east of Baldur's Gate. She worked as a kitchen maid and then a tavern wench, trying but never succeeding in working off the debt of her early keep. (This was actually a ploy on the part of the gnomes to keep her safely inside the walls of the Friendly Arm.) She is the illegitimate daughter of Lady Lucia Thione, a minor noblewoman of Tethyr with connections to the royal family. During the bloodbath that was the Tethyrian civil war, Lucia fled north to Waterdeep and left her daughter in safe fosterage.

Roleplaying Notes: With the return of King Haedrack to Tethyr, royal blood is once again in fashion, and any number of factions might have an interest in Isabeau. Some of these might wish to eliminate any possible challenge to the throne, while others might see in her an opportunity to mount a challenge to the new regime. Isabeau's mother, Lucia, is a member of the secret society Knights of the Shield. Lucia is the consort of Lord Inseln Hhune of Tethyr, also a high-ranking Knight as well as an advisor to (if not necessarily a supporter of) Tethyr's Queen Zaranda. Although Isabeau just recently broadened her world from the confines of the gnome stronghold to the glittering city of Waterdeep, she is extremely ambitious and could be persuaded to lend her heritage, her charms, and her considerable thieving skills to any faction that could offer her sufficient enticement.

Myrna Cassalanter

8th-Level Human Bard

Strength:	7
Dexterity:	15
Constitution:	15
Intelligence:	13
Wisdom:	13
Charisma:	17
AC:	9
THAC0:	17
Hit Points:	48
Alignment:	NE
Special Attacks:	Persuasion (see below)
Special Defenses:	+4 bonus to saving throws vs. Enchantment/Charm spell effects
Size:	M (5'5")

Weapon Proficiencies: Stiletto, Dagger.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Reading/Writing—Common (14), Reading Lips (11), Forgery (14), Gaming (17), Local History (17), Heraldry (13), Land-Based Riding (16), Hawking (13), Dancing (15), Singing (17), Etiquette (17).

Bardic Specialties: Myrna is a rumor-monger by profession and inclination. She gathers and disseminates information for a price, which makes her a useful contact and a dangerous foe. She has a prodigious, trained memory. Although she sings well, she does not have the musical training of a true Bard. Her interest in the past is limited and practical: If it has no bearing on current gossip, Myrna can't be bothered. She possesses the Legend Lore ability, but she has so little interest in magic that she has never attempted to explore the benefits of Arcane Lore. When passing along rumors, she receives a –2 bonus to reaction rolls. In addition, listeners act as if under the influence of a *suggestion* spell, and most "believe" her rumors for 1 round.

Equipment: Myrna has considerable personal wealth, and she enjoys the use of a small mansion, a vast wardrobe, a stable with riding and carriage horses, several hawks, and a considerable personal library with books detailing the heraldry, history, and scandals of generations of influential Waterdhavians.

Magical Items: *Ring of warmth* (helpful to a woman determined to wear revealing gowns in a cold climate), *amulet of clear-thinking* (+4 protection against magical attempts to influence, charm, or otherwise steal her secrets), *elfwhisper ear rings* (which increase her ability to hear by a 20' radius). She also possesses a number of Dream Spheres, a form of magical entertainment that enables the owner to vividly experience some wondrous event as if it were occurring.

Appearance: Myrna's wardrobe and grooming reflect her position and lifestyle: She is usually clad in elaborate, revealing gowns accented with gems. Her hair is always dressed in a complicated, upswept style, and its bright red hue owes much to Calishite henna. Her face's sharp angles are maintained by vigorous near-starvation and delineated by too much cosmetics. Her best feature is her pale, perfect complexion, which she enhances with cosmetics and judicious doses of belladonna.

Background: Myrna is a member of the Cassalanter family of Waterdeep, a noble clan whose fortune is based upon banking, moneylending, and information-gathering. Myrna showed an aptitude for gossip at an early age, and she has become one of the best sources of information in upper-class Waterdeep. Although she prides herself on the accuracy of her gossip, she is also willing to spread false information—anonymously, of course, and for a price that reflects the risk to her reputation. Myrna has enjoyed the licentious freedom afforded to a woman of her rank and position, but she is beginning to look about for a match that will improve her standings and fortune. Her chief rival is Galinda Raventree, a notable hostess.

Roleplaying Notes: Myrna is not physically strong, nor is she skilled with weapons, but she is an effective assassin of character and reputation. As such, she can influence how a Bard's message might be received, whether a new Fighter in town is regarded with respect or suspicion, or whether an adventuring party is given audience by a high-placed member of society.

Jerome Diloontier

4th-Level Human Fighter

Strength:	10
Dexterity:	13
Constitution:	10
Intelligence:	14
Wisdom:	11
Charisma:	9
AC:	8
THAC0:	19
Hit Points:	35
Alignment:	CN
Special Attacks:	Nil
Special Defenses:	+6 saving throw bonus to Poison
Magic Resistance:	50% resistance to Enchantment/Charm magic; impervious to torture
Size:	M (5'8")

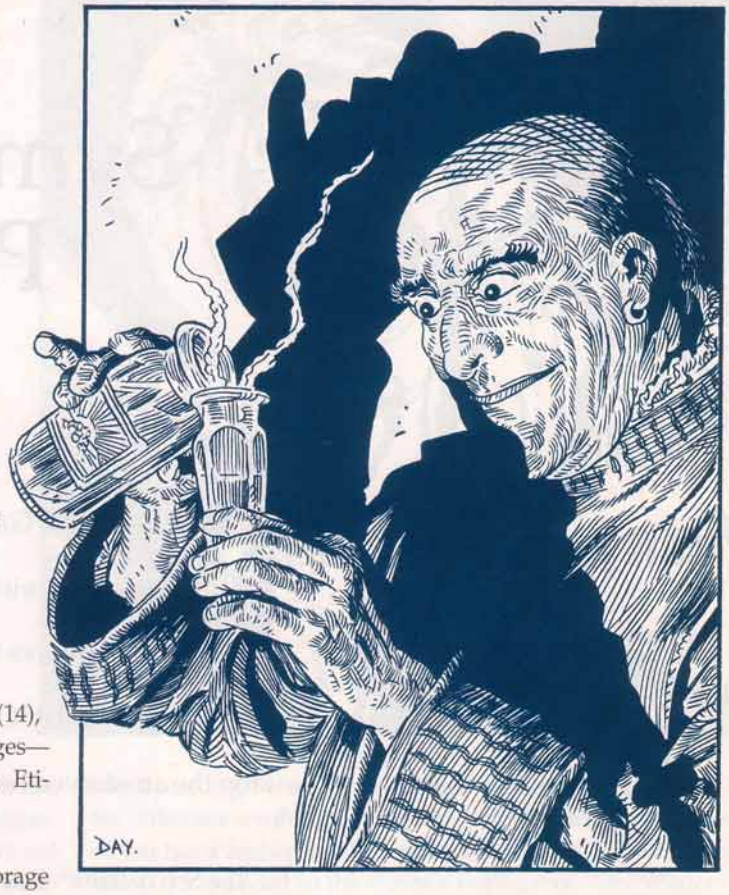
Weapon Proficiencies: Knife, Sling, Dagger, Short Sword.

Nonweapon Proficiences: Herbalism (12), Alchemy (14), Healing (9), Brewing (14), Forgery (12), Modern Languages—Common, Undercommon (14), Reading/Writing (15), Etiquette (9).

Equipment: A well-equipped shop, workroom, and storage shed in Waterdeep. He also has standard adventurer's gear for infrequent trips into Skullport.

Appearance: Diloontier is a perfumer, a fine craftsman who serves Waterdeep's wealthy. He does very well, and his clothing and bearing reflect his prosperity. He is not an attractive man, though, and he bears a rather disquieting resemblance to a frog. His lips are thin and his mouth very wide. His head is balding, and the meager dark strands are oiled and smoothed sleekly back. He wears his knee breeches belted high over a rather round, protruding belly, and his legs are thin and bowed. He is in late middle age and does not wear his years well. His manner is haughty or obsequious, depending upon the wealth and position of the person with whom he's dealing.

Background: A native of Westgate, Diloontier learned the poisoner's art from his mother, who was an assassin affiliated with the notorious Night Masks. He spent a number of years as a minor assassin and still has excellent contacts among those who ply this dark trade. He desired a more refined and respectable life, however, and he feels a fawning regard for those who possess wealth and title. He left home early and served apprenticeships under elven craftsmaster Elorith Springmeadow, master perfumer of Silverymoon. He came to Waterdeep fifteen years ago, and with this impressive background (and a purse filled through a few lucrative forays into his mother's profession) he set up shop and soon became the source for perfumes, minor philters, and more clandestine trade.



Roleplaying Notes: If you get on the bad side of Waterdeep's wealthy elite, chances are you'll have dealings with Diloontier. But you probably won't realize it. He is under a *geas*, a powerful spell that prohibits him from revealing the names of his clients or the nature of their transactions. If he is questioned directly about a particular client, even under the force of magical compulsion, he will improvise a convincing lie. Feel free to hire him—your secrets will be kept. This *geas*, plus the elaborate and intricate maze of referrals and codes that a prospective client must unravel to engage Diloontier's darker services, provides a high degree of safety and confidentiality. Anyone who wishes to buy poisons or hire the services of thugs or even assassins would do well to frequent Diloontier's shop, take note of his clients, and observe which of those clients seem to have extraordinary fortune in the untimely demise of their rivals and enemies. Cultivate these clients, and they might provide the necessary introduction and reference. It's a lengthy process, but for highly sensitive matters there is no better source than Diloontier in all of Waterdeep. Assassins who wish to find work should don their best clothes and wander into the perfumer's shop. They, too, need ample reference from people established in the trade—it is not a place for would-be assassins looking to wet their blades and earn some quick and easy coin. Such people tend to quietly disappear. On a lighter note, "Snowflowers at Dawn" is currently a favorite scent among fashionable young ladies. Any gentleman searching for the perfect gift need look no further.

Symbiotes and Parasites

Hold still . . . you've got something on you.

by Johnathan M. Richards

illustrated by Brad McDevitt

THE AD&D® GAME HAS PROVIDED A VAST ASSORTMENT of creatures for virtually every environment imaginable. There are creatures that live in caverns deep under the earth and have never seen the light of day. Others live in the deepest reaches of the oceans or atop the air-starved heights of the highest mountains.

The SPELLJAMMER® setting introduced creatures that live in the airless void of space, as well as odd beings that have adapted to life in the phlogiston. The PLANESCAPE® setting details creatures that live in planes composed of endless fire, eternal plains of salt crystals, and the nothingness of a total vacuum. Even considering only the creatures living in an Earth-like environment such as those making their homes in the FORGOTTEN REALMS®, GREYHAWK®, or DRAGONLANCE® settings, there are few possible environments that haven't been previously populated with unusual beasts.

Here are four new AD&D game creatures who make their homes in one of the most unusual game "environments": the bodies of humans, demihumans, and humanoids. While parasitism isn't new ground forAD&D creatures—bloodrings, ear seekers, wizard lice (from the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Annual Volume One*), and fleas of madness (from the *RAVENLOFT® MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III: Creatures of Darkness*), to name but a few, have trod this territory before with maddening results—the creatures detailed in the following pages add to the ranks of this oft-neglected "environment."

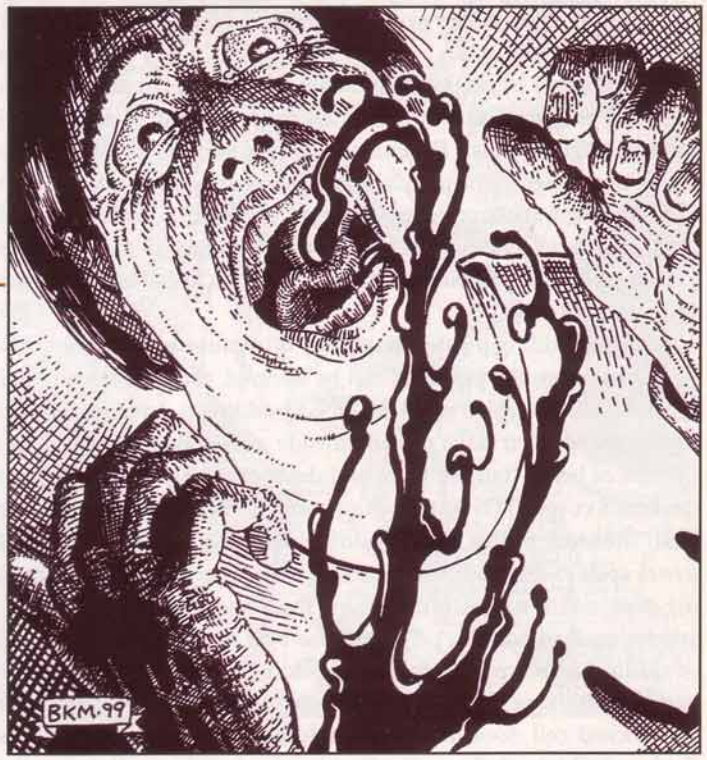
Both parasites and symbiotes can be found living on a host organism. The difference between the two types of creatures is that, while a symbiote provides a beneficial service for the host, a parasite only takes, giving nothing in return (or at least nothing to the host's long-term benefit). The blood pudding and powerslug are parasites, whereas both the skullcap ivy and worry-wart fall into the symbiotic category, as they can be beneficial to the organism on which they live. Most host creatures find even symbiotes to be irritating or distasteful, even if their true nature is revealed. On the other hand, many infected hosts don't realize they have become home to a new creature—at least not until it is too late to do anything about it.

Johnathan M. Richards once had hair long enough to be dangerous if it ever tried strangling him. Then he joined the military.

Blood Pudding

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any land
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Blood
INTELLIGENCE:	Average to Genius (9–18)
TREASURE:	See below
ALIGNMENT:	Any Evil

NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	10 (or as per host)
MOVEMENT:	6 (or as per host)
HIT DICE:	4+2
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 (if inside host)
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	By weapon type
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Domination of host organism
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to normal weapons
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	S–M
MORALE:	Steady (11–12)
XP VALUE:	975 (as pudding) or 2,000 (with host)



The blood pudding is a parasitic form of undead. It is the unnatural result of an evil Wizard's attempt at indefinitely prolonging his or her life. The transformation from living Wizard to undead blood pudding is surer than the attempt to attain lichdom, and the Wizard need not attain 18th level before attempting the transformation. For these reasons, many evil (and impatient) Necromancers choose to become blood puddings rather than liches.

A blood pudding is made up of the blood that once flowed through the Wizard's veins, infused with the Wizard's life-force, intelligence, and powers of free-willed movement. When outside a host body, it looks like a pool of spilled blood and gives off the thick, coppery scent associated with fresh blood. While hidden inside a host body, the blood pudding cannot be seen.

The term "blood pudding" has been given to these foul creatures, but this is somewhat of a misnomer, for they are not a member of the class of colony creatures collectively referred to as the "deadly puddings." Blood puddings do not split into two smaller creatures when struck by weapons or lightning, nor are they acidic in nature. They are aware of their surroundings, however, in a manner similar to the black pudding's innate ability to sense heat and analyze material structure from a distance of up to 90 feet. Blood puddings can also hear nearly as well as a human.

Combat: An "exposed" blood pudding (one outside a host organism) has but a single method of attack: it approaches a victim and oozes into his or her body through natural orifices—primarily the nose and mouth. This process takes 1 full round. Once inside the potential host, the pudding attempts to "take over" the victim's body. The victim must immediately make a modified Intelligence check on 1d20, as follows: If the blood pudding's Intelligence rating is higher than the victim's, the difference is subtracted from the victim's Intelligence. If the victim has a higher Intelligence than the blood pudding, the difference is added to the victim's Intelligence. Any Wisdom bonuses against mind-based attacks are also added to the victim's Intelligence. Regardless of the Intelligence levels involved between pudding and victim, a roll of 1 always succeeds, and a roll of 20 always indicates failure.

As an example, a blood pudding with Intelligence 14 attacks a farmhand with an 11 Intelligence. The farmhand must roll an 8 or less (14 – 11 = 3, 11 – 3 = 8) on 1d20 to repel the pudding's takeover attempt. If the victim had a 15 in both Intelligence and Wisdom, he would need to roll a 17 or less (15 – 14 = 1, 15 + 1 + 1 [Wisdom bonus] = 17). It is in the blood pudding's best interest to attack victims of lower Intelligence than itself.

A successful check drives the blood pudding out of the victim's body, and the pudding will not attempt to enter his body again during that encounter. If the check fails, the blood pudding gains control of the victim's body as if it were the undead Wizard's former human body. The pudding sees through the host's eyes, hears through the host's ears, and so on.

While a blood pudding is in control of a host body, the victim's mind is trapped in a form of mental catatonia—the victim can see but has no control over his or her body. Such helplessness often drives victims insane. Each week, the victim is allowed another attempt to regain control of his or her body. The figure is derived as above, but with a cumulative –2 penalty per week of blood pudding infestation. If the intelligence check is successful, the pudding is forcibly driven out as described above. If not, the pudding gains an even firmer grip upon the victim's body. Once the number the victim must roll reaches zero, his or her mind snaps irrevocably, and

the pudding need never worry about its victim fighting for control of the body again.

An "exposed" blood pudding is immune to blows from normal weapons. Magical weapons cause only one point of damage per magical "plus." For example, a *longsword* +2 inflicts 2 points of damage to the pudding. It is also shares the standard undead immunities against poison, cold, *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells. Fire, acid, and electricity inflict normal damage, and the pudding suffers 1–6 points of damage from each vial of holy water thrown on it.

A blood pudding inside a host body is immune to physical damage. Before the pudding can be harmed, the host body must be slain, at which point the blood pudding is driven out immediately. (If it stays too long inside a dead host, it runs the risk of being trapped there and deteriorating along with the host's corpse.) Of course, this makes it difficult to save a host "infected" with a blood pudding. The only way short of a *wish* spell to drive a blood pudding from its host is by casting *dispel evil* or successfully turning the blood pudding (as a special undead creature). Perhaps the best nonmagical way of ridding a victim of its parasitic pudding is by subduing and immobilizing the host. A victim chained to a wall or kept in a locked cell does the blood pudding no good, and it's liable to voluntarily leave the host in search of better living conditions. If the host's mind hasn't completely snapped under the pudding's domination, the host recovers full use of his or her body at this time. If the mind has already snapped, the victim's body is left in a catatonic state, and only high-level magic (*wish* or *restoration*, for example) can return the victim to the pre-domination state.

While inside a host body, the blood pudding can cast spells and use any magical items normally usable by Wizards. As they live for centuries, most blood puddings have an extensive collection of magical weapons: wands, staves, rods, daggers, and so on. Such items can be wielded only through a host body, as an exposed pudding has no other way of manipulating objects or speaking (and thus triggering command words).

Habitat/Society: Blood puddings are parasites of the worst kind, completely depriving their victims of the use of their own bodies. What's worse is that the victim is forced to watch his or her body under the control of another mind while being unable to stop it.

From outside appearances, there is no difference between the host organism before or after infestation by a blood pudding. However, while the pudding has complete control over its victim's body, he does not gain access to the victim's knowledge or memories, and this can cause people who know the victim well to become suspicious at the host's sudden, strange behavior. For this reason, blood puddings habitually either attack victims with which they are already very familiar (in which case they can do a reasonable job of passing themselves off as the victim) or else attack a stranger and then move to a town or city far enough away that no one is liable to recognize the victim. As blood puddings began life as Wizards, they prefer not to move far away if they can help it, as this involves considerable trouble and expense (transporting their extensive libraries, magical items, all of their alchemical apparatus, and so on).

The blood pudding's penchant for attacking victims of lower Intelligence than themselves also makes it difficult to explain why the simple goatherder suddenly moved into the Wizard's old castle and delved into spell research. For this reason, many blood puddings travel to a faraway city when their host starts growing old, taking over a new host organism to bring back to their private residences. This makes it easier on the pudding: The Wizard needn't move a huge store of possessions, and nobody in town is liable to recognize the "new person" moving into the Wizard's dwelling. Many blood puddings go so far as to draw up wills (as the current host) and leave all of their worldly possessions to a distant "relative," whose role they then assume in the new host body. This practice does much to alleviate suspicion of the blood pudding's host in the surrounding community.

Ecology: Blood puddings, as undead, play a very small role in the ecology, but they are classified as predators since they kill to survive. Not only does taking over a host body provide the pudding with a way of manipulating objects, carrying on with its magical studies, and interacting with society, but it also replenishes the blood that makes up its body. Each time the pudding takes a new host, the victim's blood is intermingled with that of the pudding, renewing and replenishing its vitality. The undead nature of the blood pudding is such that it requires such sustenance only twice every century or so.

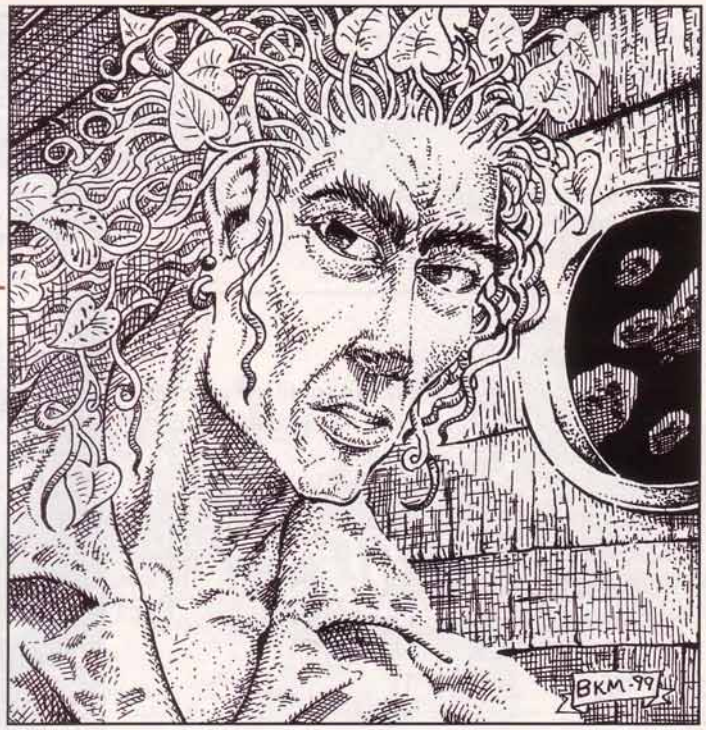
The host, however, is a different matter. Even though it becomes little more than a living puppet, dancing on the pudding's strings, it is still a living organism and requires the basics—food, drink, sleep, shelter. The blood pudding is careful to take good care of its host's needs, if only to save itself the problems of acquiring a new one.

Blood puddings do not need sleep but do not leave their hosts when they sleep for the night, fearing that the victim's mind might reassert control over its body. Instead, the pudding remains inside the slumbering body, plotting its schemes and developing its plans for the future.

Only human, demihuman, and humanoid hosts are susceptible to invasion by a blood pudding—the creature cannot seep into an animal and use it as its puppet. Also, the host must be roughly the same size as the Wizard was before his or her transformation into a blood pudding. A pudding created from the blood of a human Wizard cannot fit itself into a gnome, dwarf, or halfling body—there simply isn't enough room. On the other hand, choosing a larger body than normal is allowed—the same pudding could take over the body of an orc or hobgoblin, for instance. Usually, a blood pudding sticks with the type of body it is used to: a human female Wizard tends to choose human women as her victims; a male drow Wizard tries to stick to male drow victims if possible. Of course, some blood puddings take the opposite approach, varying their victims as often as possible to lessen the chance that anyone will guess what's really going on.

Skullcap Ivy

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any temperate land
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Sunlight, blood nutrients
INTELLIGENCE:	Nil
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	10
MOVEMENT:	1 (as seed pod), or as per host
HIT DICE:	1
THAC0:	N/A
NO. OF ATTACKS:	N/A
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	N/A
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	T
MORALE:	N/A
XP VALUE:	15 (for harvesting it only)



Skullcap ivy is a symbiotic plant that makes its home on the scalps of sentient creatures. It begins as a floating, wispy seed pod, borne on the air like dandelion fluff. When a seed pod lands on a human, demihuman, or humanoid head, it burrows into the scalp and takes root. As the plant matures, it spreads along the scalp, creating a vast network of ivy-like shoots with broad, heart-shaped leaves. It kills off hair follicles in the scalp, so as the host organism starts growing shoots of green ivy from the head, the host simultaneously loses his or her natural hair. In time, the hair is completely replaced with plant growth. If the ivy is later removed, the hair does not grow back.

Combat: Skullcap ivy is benign. While the loss of hair and the growth of plant shoots from the scalp can be a shock, the process does not harm the host. However, if the host does not wish to replace his or her hair with plant growth, the skullcap ivy can be permanently removed by pulling it from the scalp and rubbing the head with alcohol.

Those who allow the ivy to grow from their scalps must be ever vigilant against certain plant-based spells. The biggest fear is *entangle*, with which an enemy spellcaster could cause the skullcap ivy to wrap around its host's neck. Strangulation occurs if the host fails a saving throw vs. spell; the ivy strangles for 1d4 points of damage each round until destroyed. For this reason, many skullcap hosts keep the plant growths cut short, or else braid it to confine the ivy shoots.

Spells such as *hold plant* have no effect upon either the skullcap ivy or its host, as the plant doesn't move on its own, and the host remains a separate entity. (Growing skullcap ivy on one's head does not make one a plant hybrid.)

Habitat/Society: Skullcap ivy is an opportunistic symbiote, taking advantage of any chance encounter with its favorite environment: the scalp of an intelligent mammal. If the wind does not find it a potential host, the seed pod sinks its roots into the soil and becomes a normal, earth-based plant. When the time comes for it to take to seed, however, it casts its pods to the fortunes of the wind, trying once again to find a suitable host.

Many believe that the plant was coaxed into its present form by Druids. While nothing has been proven, many Druids and Rangers actively cultivate the plant, nurturing it in their own scalps and encouraging its growth. Not only does this aid in the "commune with nature," but it also gives the host a limited camouflage ability while within wooded areas. Nymphs and dryads are occasionally seen with full manes of skullcap ivy.

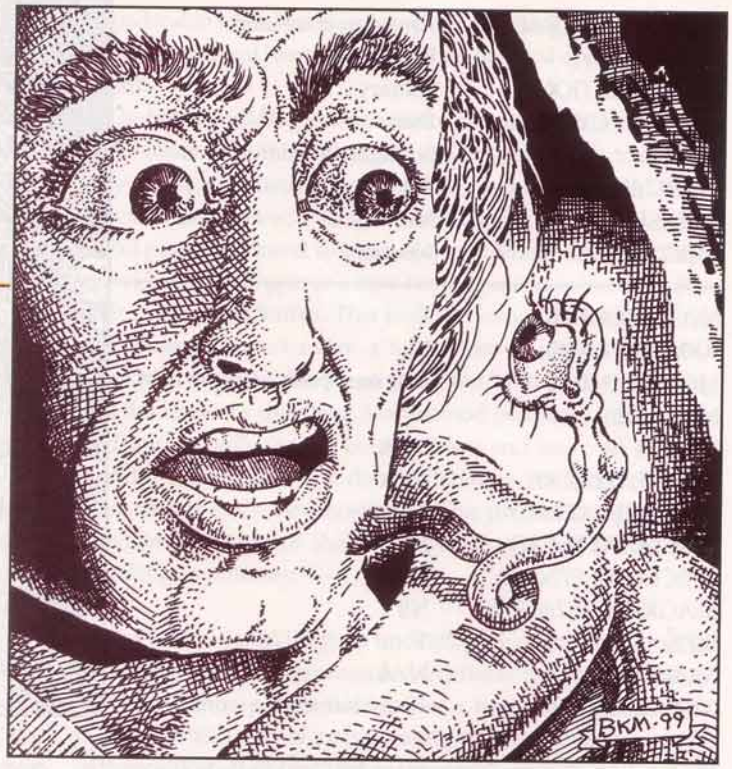
Ecology: The benefits of growing skullcap ivy in one's scalp are many. The plant is a true symbiote, bringing as much into the relationship as it takes. The plant's roots grow into the blood vessels of the host's scalp, allowing the ivy to feed upon nutrients in the host's blood if necessary. This allows the plant to thrive even in conditions where it is away from sunlight for extended periods. In return, the host gains additional nourishment directly from the plant via photosynthesis, allowing him or her to survive indefinitely on half the normal food and water supply as long as he or she has regular exposure to the sun.

In addition, both the skullcap and the host are sources of the gases necessary for the other's survival. The skullcap converts the host's exhaled carbon dioxide into oxygen, while the host breathes the oxygen and converts it to carbon dioxide. This alone makes skullcap ivy a welcome symbiote among many spelljamming crews.

On the down side, skullcap ivy produces small blue flowers in the springtime, attracting bees and wasps. Hosts must prepare themselves for the ever-present attentions of such insects during that time of the year.

Worry-Wart

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (11–12)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	Fly 6 (A) until merging with host, as per host thereafter
HIT DICE:	N/A
THAC0:	N/A
NO. OF ATTACKS:	N/A
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	N/A
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Constant vigilance
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	T
MORALE:	N/A
XP VALUE:	420



The strange creature often called a worry-wart is in fact a tiny part of a vast, amorphous, extra-dimensional creature called a *nibish-riule*. The portion of the creature's body visible in the Prime Material Plane initially appears as a quarter-inch beauty mark or mole, flying by no apparent visible means. The nibish-riule sees through this piece of itself, with infravision to a range of 60 feet. Projecting such a piece of itself into the Prime is tiring; the nibish-riule can maintain it for only an hour before it must retract to its own plane and rest for a month.

Combat: Combat with a worry-wart is usually unintentional and unnoticed, for the host is seldom aware of the creature's existence at that point. The "flying beauty mark" lands on the potential host, and a saving throw vs. poison is made. If successful, the host's anatomy is incompatible with that of the nibish-riule, and it seeks another host. If the saving throw fails, the beauty mark bonds to the host's skin. From that point, the nibish-riule's link to the Prime Material Plane is made permanent by successful merging with the host's skin.

Habitat/Society: Once the nibish-riule "plants" its beauty mark on a host, it begins setting up an internal network. The beauty mark grows roots that burrow into the host's body, connecting with blood vessels and nerve ganglia, and occasionally popping up to the surface of the skin to grow another beauty mark. When the network is complete about a month after infestation, the host has 1d4 + 2 such beauty marks.

Once the network is complete, the nibish-riule can establish contact with its host telepathically, though only the host can "hear" the disembodied voice. Nibish-riuli are inquisitive and want above all else to learn about life on the Prime Material Plane. Typical greetings are, "What's it like to be a human?" "Why do you move around on those two long things?" or "Doesn't your race find it confusing having two genders?"

Assuming the host doesn't immediately go into a screaming fit, the nibish-riule explains itself and its presence. Unfortunately for the host, by this point it's usually too late to do anything about the worry-wart's merging into the host's body, as the process is irreversible without the use of *wish*-level magic. Smart hosts learn to make the best of the situation.

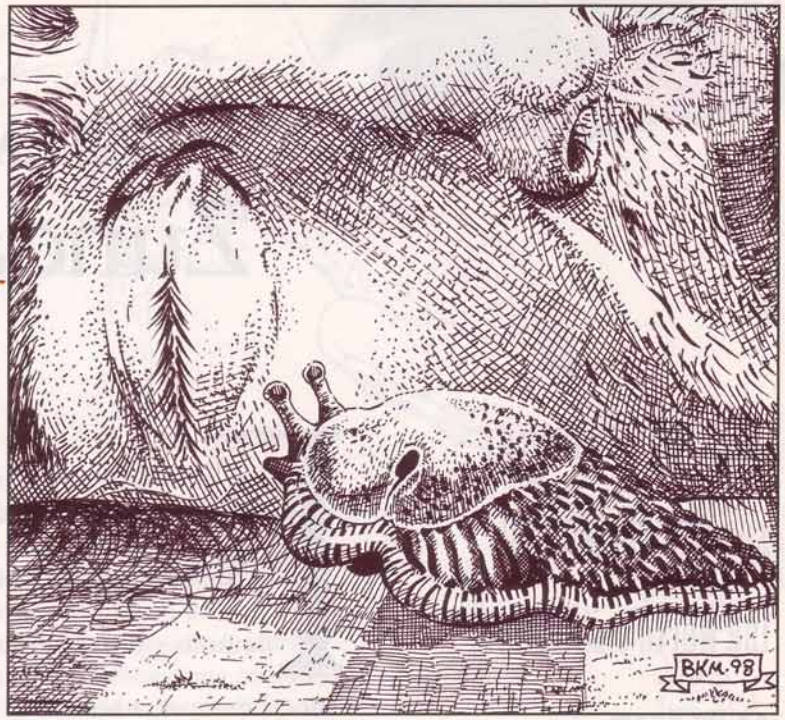
Ecology: A worry-wart's two concerns are learning about life on the Prime Material Plane and keeping its host safe so it can learn more. Because the nibish-riule never sleeps, it keeps constant vigilance on the area around its host, peeking out of its multiple beauty mark eyes. Once it's established its internal network in the host's body, it can even "pop" these beauty marks out of the host's skin on flexible eyestalks to get a better look around. The worry-wart makes an excellent lookout, telepathically warning its host of approaching danger.

Of course, there's a price to be paid for such benefits. The worry-wart, as its common nomenclature suggests, can be a nag, becoming almost motherly in its concern for the host's safety. (If the host is killed, the nibish-riule loses its fascinating window into the Prime Material Plane.) In addition, its curiosity is insatiable, leading it to ask questions about everything it sees. (Reliable sources insist it's worse than a two-year-old.) Finally, if the worry-wart disagrees with the host, it has the irritating habit of stretching an eyestalk around to stare the host in the face and telepathically inquiring, "Are you crazy?"

If a host perishes while linked to a worry-wart, the nibish-riule loses its window to the Prime Material Plane but is otherwise unharmed. After a month's rest, it casts another piece of itself through the planes in search of another host.

Powerslug

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Swamps, bogs, jungles
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Adrenaline
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	10
MOVEMENT:	1, Swim 3
HIT DICE:	1–4 hp
THAC0:	N/A
NO. OF ATTACKS:	Nil
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	Nil
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Phasing
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Phasing
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	T (2" long)
MORALE:	Average (10)
XP VALUE:	65



A powerslug is a thick-bodied gastropod found primarily in swamps and bogs, where it swims through the tepid waters in search of prey. Its black body is soft and rubbery, and two tiny eyestalks extend from its head. The powerslug exudes a slimy coating that makes it extremely slippery.

Combat: The powerslug avoids combat, preferring to sneak up on potential hosts. The creature's slimy coating acts as an anesthetic that keeps the victim from noticing its touch. Once in contact with a host, it uses its innate phasing ability to enter the host's body without breaking the skin. This is a slow process, taking 1d10 minutes; if the victim notices the intrusion, a *dispel magic* cast upon the powerslug ejects it from the body. The slug cannot be grasped or wounded while phasing.

Once inside the host's body, the powerslug attaches itself to the adrenal gland and pumps chemicals into the host's bloodstream. For the first month, there is no noticeable change in the host's behavior other than a slight irritability. After the first month, the changes become noticeable. Layers of dense muscle tissue build up in the host's body, the central nervous system becomes more efficient, and the host can endure higher levels of pain. Each week after the initial month of parasitic infestation, the host's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores each increase by one point. Once this pushes the host into the 18 Strength range, additional Strength bonuses add one level of percentile Strength each week.

As the host's physical prowess grows, so does the capacity for mindless violence, forcing the host to make a saving throw vs. poison each time a potential combat situation occurs. The saving throw incurs a cumulative –1 penalty for each week of "body enhancement." If the saving throw is successful, the host can avoid violence. If it fails, the host jumps into combat, fighting to the death. At first, a "combat situation" might include being attacked by a hostile enemy. As the infestation progresses, a combat situation ranges from someone accidentally spilling the host's drink to not liking someone's looks.

Once one of the host's ability scores reaches 19, there is a cumulative 10% chance per round of combat that the stresses put upon the host's body are too much. If this point is reached, the host's heart simply explodes in his or her chest, causing immediate death. The powerslug then exits the body by phasing through it and leaves in search of another victim.

A *remove curse* spell cast on the host by a Priest of 9th or higher level drives a powerslug from the body.

Habitat/Society: Powerslug hosts are usually not even aware of the parasite. The initial benefits of infestation often have the unwitting host jumping for joy. However, as the infestation progresses and the host becomes more violent, the host's companions start to notice that something is wrong.

If the powerslug is driven from the host's body, it uses its phasing abilities to escape into the nearest pool of water or muck. (While phasing, it is immune to weapons unless the weapon-wielder can somehow affect ethereal creatures.) Once the powerslug is no longer present, the host's ability scores drop to their pre-infestation levels.

Ecology: Powerslugs feed on the adrenaline pumped into the host's system during times of great stress, as during battle. This chemical manipulation is their way of ensuring the flow of adrenaline. Unlike most parasites, the powerslug cares little about killing its host; it'll just find another one.

Powerslugs aren't choosy about their warm-blooded hosts. They can be found in animals; in fact, many violent animal attacks are the result of powerslug infestation. Druids hate these creatures, for they disrupt the harmony of nature.

THE LAUGHING WYRM

Zundaerazylym

This steel dragon's secrets could spell the North's salvation—or its doom.

by
Ed Greenwood

illustrated by
Storn Cook

FEW HAVE HEARD OF ZUNDAERAZYLYM, but this last Wyrm of the North (in Volo's researches, at least) should be famous—or infamous—from one end of Toril to the other. She's not, however, a seeker of publicity. This venerable steel dragon has been hiding in human form for years in Neverwinter. She has taken her true shape only to fight off a raiding Mage of the Brotherhood of the Arcane—Aerlendan "Shadowtalons" Mardilaer, whom she tore apart over the Sea of Swords in the Year of the Wave (1364 DR)—and to devour a pair of wyverns who some forty years earlier made the fatal mistake of deciding to lair in the southernmost Crags.

In her human existence, Zundaerazylym is Amundra Nelaerdra, a plump, gossiping, happy laundress and seamstress who makes stylish everyday gowns and cloaks for the ladies of Neverwinter. She also repairs and cleans all of the exotic costumes and flashy garb worn at the Moonstone Mask, the most famous inn, restaurant, and festhall in the City of Skilled Hands.

Nelaerdra is pudgy, stooping, and going gray (in attractive streaks), but Zundaerazylym does spend occasional nights in more attractive human guises, taking the shape of sick or weary lady staffers at the Mask.

The owner of the Mask, the sorceress Ophala Cheldarstorn, has led her staff to believe her own spells transform a "skilled but aging courtesan" to take their places. Ophala and Zundaerazylym are firm friends, and the sorceress knows Amundra Nelaerdra's true nature. Ophala aids the steel dragon from time to time with her spells, and she keeps Zundaerazylym's hoard magically hidden in an undisclosed place. It is not buried underground, in the Mask, or in Nelaerdra's Bright Weaves Laundry.

Zundaerazylym often helps out Ophala in return. More than once the "Laughing Laundress of Neverwinter" has smuggled prominent guests out of the Mask in her gigantic baskets of laundry, enabling them to avoid embarrassing confrontations with rivals, murderous foes, spouses, superiors, or admirers. She has also, on several memorable nights, flown important agents and members of the Lords' Alliance out of Neverwinter on her back when they needed to be elsewhere in a hurry.

Zundaerazylym claims no domain, but she considers Neverwinter her territory. She defends it against other dragons who dare to reveal themselves openly and aggressively in or above its streets or try to dominate its folk (rather than dwelling among them as she does). Battle so excites her that she chortles and hoots almost constantly during combat—hence, her nickname, "the Laughing Wyrm." So far, no one has connected the Laughing Laundress with the Laughing Wyrm ... but then, there's no reason they should. Amundra Nelaerdra doesn't behave proudly or as if she has secrets apart from the latest juicy gossip.

Zundaerazylym likes adventurers (though she's wary of large mercenary companies and secretive organizations), is wary of unfamiliar Wizards, and dislikes blusterers and tyrants—whether they be children lording it over their fellows in alleys or kings who mistreat their subjects or try to conquer new territory. She often seeks out drunken, brawling, or bullying sailors who have come to port (Luskanites are habitual offenders), or haughty or overly cruel visiting adventurer-mages, and teaches them a lesson. She usually lures them into private places by posing as a flirtatious tavern wench, then changes to dragon form with clashing jaws and wild laughter. Usually Zundaerazylym lets those she's terrified flee unscathed, but she's been known to tear a Mage's staff, cloak, and garments away (to remove his magic), or break a sailor's swordarm and the sword with it.

Zundaerazylym might seem to do no more than take the usual whimsical interest in humans that any steel dragon "gone human" does, but she has more secret schemes and hushed achievements than most dragons can imagine.

Zundaerazylym follows a bright dream of her own. She wants dragonkind to live in harmony with humans and demihumans—perhaps as the champions and defenders of realms peopled and governed by (as she puts it) "the teeming, so-called 'civilized' races." This, she believes, would result in happier, better lives for all.

Zundaerazylym rarely takes her true form.

To accomplish this, wyrms have to see themselves as guardians of a common treasure, not "their own" hoards. Rapacious dragons must be slain, and all dragons must find food that is not the creatures they hope to dwell with (or great numbers of these same creatures' livestock). Some dragons will always feel the need to hunt, but hunger mustn't force them to eat their allies, friends, or fellow citizens.

The Dreaming Wyrm (as her agents, the Soft Claws, call her; just to confuse things, they also refer to her as "the Never Wyrm") is quick to say "Dreamers are dangerous," but she's become that most deadly force for change: a being who energetically tries to make her dreams become real. She's set about trying to protect civilization in the Sword Coast North and create the alternative food source she deems necessary.

Protecting Civilization

Zundaerazylym sees two great dangers to the North: the harsh climate and orc hordes. The first must be endured (magical attempts to meddle with the weather, in her opinion, lead only to disasters), but the Dreaming Wyrm believes she can do something about the orc problem.

Orcs are fecund, and periodically they grow too numerous for their homes in the labyrinthine mountain-heart caverns of the North. When this happens, they boil forth and sweep down on all surface settlements and creatures in their path, pushing onward (usually south, toward warmer, lusher lands) until they are eventually destroyed, leaving great destruction in their wake.

What if the most evil, hungry, and aggressive dragons held lairs in the path of the emerging orc hordes, so that the one would be forced to fight the other? Somehow such dragons must be manipulated into relocating their lairs in the right places. Zundaerazylym tries to do this through her agents, the Soft Claws, with carefully planted legends and rumors about lost dragon hoards and vacant dragon lairs that slowly confer magical powers to wyrms who dwell in them.

Longbite

The edible fungi that makes cavern-dwelling orcs so energetic, fertile, and hardy is a brown, fissured, rather fuzzy-textured yet crunchy substance that grows in even the coldest, dampest caverns. It needs no light, but flourishes when light is present and expands at a riotous rate in the presence of

volcanic or other heat. Found growing in striations or parallel, horizontal "ridges" on rock walls, it is *arantym* to the dwarves and (thanks to its appearance) *ripplebark* to humans, though it isn't bark at all.

This nut-flavored, woody fungus spreads by means of spores. These spores are harmless to humans; when inhaled or ingested, they simply pass through the body like other wastes, and can thus be carried as humans travel. The spores can consume living or dead wood, plant material, other fungi, and even airborne nutrients (from mists). Ripplebark can lay dormant for long periods of drought, extreme cold, or lack of nutrition; to remain alive, it only needs to "feed" about every eight years. Scorched or dead ripplebark turns black but is still edible, and it alters disease germs as it absorbs them, rendering them harmless. Orcs thrive on this unexciting but abundant fare.

In her search for a lasting replacement food source for dragons, Zundaerazylym seized on ripplebark and for many years tried to modify or augment it. At length she hit upon a still-secret mixture in which she soaks ripplebark fragments for a month to create what she calls "longbite." (Formally, the substance is known as *routhduin*, which is a word concocted from elven, dwarven, and dragon-tongue roots, combined to mean something akin to "improved to achieve satiation" or "bettered to be satisfying."

Her process renders the ripplebark able to sustain all but the most terribly wounded or most active dragons for months on a small meal. "Most active" includes those rare dragons who spend a third of their time fighting or hunting. "Small" in this case means a volume of longbite roughly equivalent to the bodies of three average-sized humans.

Zundaerazylym's mixture—an iridescent syrup—is known to be predominantly water and includes *potions of vitality*, dissolved *air spores* (see the *Tome of Magic* or Volume 1 of the *Encyclopedia Magica*™ tome), the sap of oak or ash trees, dissolved pearls, and at least a dozen other ingredients, many of which are powdered. Soft Claw agents believe that the ground bones of some creature are one of these and have learned to their cost that the mixture is poisonous if drunk (even sipped sparingly) by elves, half-elves, or humans.

The Laughing Wyrm keeps her agents so busy retrieving large varieties of strange substances for her (some of which are undoubtedly continuing experiments aimed at creating a successful "Softscale Soak") such as pumice, pine nuts, chicken livers, lamb kidneys, and bullrushes that no one has been able to set down a definitive ingredient list for "longbite." Zundaerazylym is even known to have made large profits by cornering the market on particular goods, then reselling them in bulk when shortages occur. Some of her acquisitions—many of them stored in hidden caverns under the Neverwinter Woods and garrisoned by the Soft Claws—may not be for alchemical purposes at all.

The Softscale Soak

Not so different in appearance from the current incarnation of the "longbite" mixture, the "Softscale Soak" is an experimental healing and restorative bath for dragons. It's intended to keep the scales supple, the senses keen, and otherwise slow the physical side effects of age, allowing the complete regeneration of sorely wounded dragons. Ingredients of the current Soak, which is thought to have accomplished Zundaerazylym's first and lesser healing aim, are known to include the discarded shells of hatched dragon eggs, as well as dissolved dragon bones and scales (though just what was used to dissolve them, the Laughing Wyrm keeps secret).

At least once, Zundaerazylym has plunged into the heart of an orc horde in the mountain vales and deliberately lingered in battle until badly wounded. She was then snatched back to a disused quarry near Conyberry by the spells of Ophala Cheldarstorn and lowered into a bath of her own preparation. Most of these Soaks failed to do more than soothe her, but the Laughing Wyrm still believes a successful sovereign healing bath for dragons is possible, if she can just hit upon the right formula for it.

The Soft Claws

To gain materials for her immersion projects, to keep watch on orc populations, and to gather information on the whereabouts and deeds of dragons throughout western Faerûn, Zundaerazylym needs a band of capable but nondescript undercover agents. She

began recruiting such from the ranks of local traders, woodcarvers, and failed adventurers some forty years ago, and the dedicated folk she is pleased to call her Soft Claws now number over sixty humans, elves, halflings, and half-elves. These agents operate as far east as Suzail and as far south as Baldur's Gate.

The Laughing Wyrm suspects there are both Heralds and Harpers in the Soft Claws, but she worries more about infiltration by the Cult of the Dragon, the Arcane Brotherhood, or Mages bent on gaining power over dragons. This concern has deepened in recent years, as more than one of her agents have gone missing—and their *nevertokens* with them. *Nevertokens* are enchanted recognition badges carried by all Soft Claws, given to them by Zundaerazylym. She has a cache of more than one hundred of these identical items, for the entire cache of Halruaan family trading-tokens was given to her in the Year of the Watching Cold (1320 DR) by Ensible Mritavvalan, the dying last member of that family.

The Soft Claws have many duties beyond spying and fetching. They try to "relocate" active dragons by improving or even creating lair-caverns in desired locales (remote northern mountains, perilously close to orc colonies); daringly planting maps (usually in the packsacks of "recovered treasure") near known dragon lairs; or even posing as adventurers and using *farhailing* spells to talk to one another about rich dragon lairs they're heading for, so that a dragon in its lair "accidentally" overhears them. They also plant rumors in the ranks of the Cult of the Dragon to manipulate the activities of that evil organization.

Some prominent members of the northern society are Soft Claws. Bruldin Oldturret (NG hm F6) is a trader of plain appearance, stolid expression, and wide knowledge of northern forest trails and backlands. Tamaer Shiversword (CG hem F9) is a flamboyant, failed adventurer with a knack for mimicry and a love of pranks, bold gambles, and disguises. Jhavaerra Erbrand (CG hf T4) is a well-traveled "finder" or talent scout for the Mask who serves the Claws by establishing trading contacts among merchants in distant cities, gathering information on dragons and the Dragon Cult, and so on. Finally, Iorl Skyndul (CG hm T6) is a Calishite thief, smuggler, and fence of stolen goods who delights in all the minor magics Zundaerazylym has given him over the years and the deceptions he can accomplish using them.

The Soft Claws use the Moonstone Mask as their primary covert rallying place and regard the Laughing Wyrm as a kindly mother. This is fitting, when one considers that she nurses them back to health, occasionally comes winging to their rescue, arranges careers for them, and dispenses advice as well as unofficial salaries. These payments come irregularly but often; Zundaerazylym is never short of money thanks to her trading acumen, the efforts of the Claws on her behalf, and the legacy left to her by the last of the Mritavvalans, whom she rescued from family foes and guarded for the last three decades of his life. She always has time to sit with her agents and discuss their own dreams and goals.

Nevertokens

The origin of these family tokens is now unknown; they probably couldn't be made today without much experimentation. Many early Halruaan families possessed similar devices, but newer families have none. Elder families now either profess no knowledge of such things, or simply ignore queries regarding the items.

All of Zundaerazylym's *nevertokens* appear as identical, glossy-smooth, silvery blue, four-pointed metal stars. Each is 1 inch thick and about 4 inches across from point to point. They're lighter than their volume suggests, pierced in the center to allow a neck-chain or keepstrap to be passed through them, and their points and edges are rolled and blunt. They are constructed of an unknown alloy that is extremely durable and resistant to damage. In fact, it's hard to mark a *nevertoken* with anything short of a forge hammer; when broken, a *token* typically bursts into a flaring flame and falls to dust in seconds. Unless the flare strikes a creature's face, wood shavings, or similar flammables, the passing of a token causes no harm. All *nevertokens* are protected by

a blueshine treatment, and all emit a pleasant four-tone metallic chord, like a quartet of bells, when struck (a property difficult to fake without careful spellwork).

All *nevertoken* powers function when the item is grasped with bare flesh and a power is willed into action. Handling a *token* doesn't yield any hint of its abilities; Zundaerazylym instructs her agents in *token* powers, yielding information about the strongest abilities only when she comes to trust a particular Soft Claw.

Nevertoken powers all function as their corresponding Wizard spells as if cast by a Mage of 20th level, with the exceptions noted hereafter. Each ability operates once or, if ongoing, as long as the bearer desires, for up to 1 turn of continuous operation. When it ceases, that particular power won't work again until twenty-four hours or 144 turns have elapsed. Only one *nevertoken* power can be active at a time; powers aren't altered by the *token*'s location or surroundings.

The presently known powers are as follows (Zundaerazylym might know of others she hasn't yet revealed):

- *Drawmij's instant summons*
- *elsewhere* (Each *nevertoken* can "hide" a single all-metal item, not larger than a longsword suited for an average human, in an extra-dimensional space. It appears in the bearer's grasp, when desired, for 1 turn, then vanishes "back into storage." Only Zundaerazylym knows how to "change" the stored item. If the item is broken while in use, this power ceases to function until the Laughing Wyrm does "something" to the particular *nevertoken*.)
- *feather fall* (bearer only; lasts for one descent even if longer than 1 turn)
- *invisibility* (bearer and directly worn or carried objects only; ceases instantly for objects released by bearer, or when bearer deliberately and successfully attacks another being)
- *mending* (when touched to break)
- *mind blank* (lasts its usual one day, not 1 turn)
- *nevereturn* (The bearer can send the *token* back to a Soft Claw-garrisoned cavern under the Neverwinter Woods if he or she is doomed or captured to prevent it from falling into enemy hands. For this power to function, the bearer must touch the item and lose 12 hit points. The ability fails if the bearer doesn't have 12 hit points to lose, but if it works, the *token* can't be called back by any known means.)
- *pass without trace* (bearer only)
- *sending*
- *silence, 15' radius* (centered on *token*, and continues functioning for a turn even if thrown or left behind by bearer)
- *sovereign succor* (This ability "calls" on the holder of another *nevertoken* and works only if the two *tokens* have previously been touched together, with both holders willing a link to occur for this specific purpose. The other *token* bearer feels the call and can either resist it—in which case the function fails and can't be tried again for a day—or submit to it without knowing the caller's location or circumstances. In the latter case, the bearer has 1 round to grab weapons or otherwise prepare before a *teleport without error* takes the bearer to a safe spot willed by the caller. If the locale chosen isn't genuinely safe, the magic instead takes the new arrival to the nearest truly safe spot.)
- *teleport without error* (bearer and one touched being of not more than twice the bearer's mass, along with all garments and carried or worn gear of both, to 600-lb. maximum)
- *trace nevertoken* (The bearer can trace a path to the nearest *token* only; precise direction and impression of distance gained, but no hint of bearer's surroundings or state. A particular *nevertoken* or person can't be searched for, but an isolated *token* can, of course, be readily "homed in on.")

XP Value: 20,000 **GP Value:** 200,000

Zundaerazylym's Fate

The ambitious dreams pursued by the Laughing Wyrm, along with her spying on nearby dragons, seem likely to lead her into disaster. Most evil dragons will slay or capture her to gain her longbite secrets if they learn of them, and for Zundaerazylym's schemes to come to fruition, she must sooner or later reveal longbite to all dragons. Even if this is somehow accomplished so quickly and widely that one dragon can't gain an advantage over another, the Laughing Wyrm and her comparatively puny force of Soft Claws will still be faced with the problem of a dragon—or the Cult of the Dragon (in the face of a crushing blow to their influence over dragons)—moving enthusiastically to try to control most of the easily-reached ripplebark.

Even hints of a partially successful Softscale Soak would spell the same peril for Zundaerazylym. The Soft Claws know they are in for a dangerous ride in the years ahead—and more than one of them knows what Zundaerazylym only suspects: Certain Harpers, and probably some of the Chosen, know of the Laughing Wyrm's activities. They might at any time choose to act against her or sweep in to seize what she's crafted.

Zundaerazylym knows of the increasing danger and seems to sense her remaining time might be short. With increasing daring, she is seeking out passing adventurers to carry her secrets to other places and custodians of lore, notably Candlekeep. Her gamble is a long shot indeed. If she succeeds, however, Faerûn will be changed forever... and that's more than many tyrants or gods accomplish.

Ed Greenwood is a trifle weary of wyrms by now but hopes you've enjoyed these glimpses of things draconic. He's planning another column for the issues ahead but is frankly petrified by some of the things Volo's jotted down in his notebooks—and even more by Elminster's reaction to some of them, though the Old Mage has promised to replace the east wall of the barn soon.

D&D®'s Greatest Hits

It's taken nearly a QUARTER CENTURY to recover the hit points you lost in White Plume Mountain.

LET'S FACE IT.
You got your ass handed to you.

But listen. Is that Keraptis,
MOCKING YOU
after all this time?

"Search ye far or search ye near . . . ."

The **Dungeons & Dragons**® adventure game engendered a new chapter in gaming.

Twenty-five years later, TSR is celebrating its Silver Anniversary with the re-release of the finest roleplaying products ever produced.

It's all coming back to you.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

TIME TO PLAY.

Questions? Call (800) 324-6496,
or visit our website at ‹**www.tsr.com**›.

SILVER TSR ANNIVERSARY

TSR, Dungeons & Dragons, D&D and the Silver Anniversary logo are trademarks of TSR, Inc. TSR, Inc. is a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©1999 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Sleep on It

For the weary adventurer, a selection of the finest in pillows, blankets, and bedrolls.

by Drew Karpyshyn

illustrated by Jim Crabtree

"LEGENDARY?" THE YOUNG MAN SCOFFED. "You claim the wizard Alberg was legendary? His title was Alberg the Lazy!"

"A foolish title," the elder replied, "and one given by those who didn't understand his nature. Alberg was a mighty mage with a brilliant mind—a magical genius, some say."

The young man protested, "They also say he slept nearly fourteen hours each day!"

"True," the elder conceded. "But genius can be tiresome, and it wearies even the most brilliant mind. Besides, much of the time he was not just sleeping but doing research. Do not underestimate the power of sleep and dreams—a step into the world of dreams is a step closer to the world of magic."

The debate over Alberg the Lazy—slumbering genius or drowsy kook—might never be settled. But one thing not in dispute is his creation of several magical items directly related to sleep, a few of which are detailed below.

For most of the items, a full night's sleep (six hours) is necessary to receive their benefits. Other items function only while the character is sleeping. It should typically take a character 1d4 turns to fall into a deep enough state of sleep for the magic to function. Also, be aware that a *sleep* spell or similar enchantment is not an appropriate state of consciousness to receive the magical effects of these items.

Cover *of* Invisibility

Any objects or creatures completely covered (including the head and limbs) by this magical blanket blend into their surroundings and become effectively invisible, as per the Wizard spell *invisibility*. Note that the user need not be sleeping for this power to work—it takes effect as soon as the blanket is in place. The *invisibility* lasts only as long as the blanket remains still and undisturbed. Even slight movements such as a moving arm or leg destroy the illusion.

The *cover* can shield the equivalent of two medium-sized creatures. All who see the blanket being initially positioned are immune to the effects.

XP Value: 500 **GP Value:** 2,500

Bedroll *of* the Woodsman

One night spent sleeping under the stars with this *bedroll* enables the user to perform the following abilities as a 4th-level

Ranger: Tracking, Survival, Animal Empathy, Hide in Shadows, Move Silently, and Nature Lore. These effects last only as long as the character remains beneath the open sky and above ground, ending as soon as any building, cave, tunnel, or similar enclosure is entered. A Ranger using the *bedroll* performs the listed abilities as if three levels higher as long as he or she stays under the open sky.

XP Value: 1,000 **GP Value:** 5,000

Blanket of Security

Initially this cursed blanket appears to be one of the other types of magical blankets. The *blanket of security's* true nature becomes apparent during its user's first stressful encounter after sleeping under the *blanket*. In any combat situation, the character who last slept on or under the *blanket* becomes apprehensive and hesitant (–2 on all attack rolls). *Fear* spells and similar effects always work at their maximum effect with no saving throw. During each round of combat, there is a 1-in-6 chance that the character suffers a panic attack and becomes completely helpless for 1d6 rounds.

At the first available opportunity, the affected character retrieves the *blanket* and clutches it in his or her off hand. While holding the *blanket*, the character is unable to use a shield or a two-handed weapon and cannot cast spells with a somatic component. Despite these restrictions, the character feels reassured and confident. The owner engages in melee combat in every confrontation, regardless of class and is immune to all types of fear, magical or otherwise.

Any attempts to take the *blanket* from the cursed individual results in immediate attack. Destroying the *blanket* does not remove the curse and leaves the character in a perpetually panicked state as described above. A *remove curse* spell is required to break the bond between *blanket* and character.

XP Value: Nil **GP Value:** 1,500

Blanket of Recuperation

A single hour spent sleeping on or under this magical *blanket* is equivalent to a full night (six hours) of rest. The user automatically wakes up after the hour has passed, feeling refreshed and invigorated. The *blanket's* effects apply only to physical capabilities, do not aid in any mental forms of recovery (such as spells), and affect only humans, demihumans, and other humanoids. (It can't be used to refresh a horse after a hard ride.)

There are no ill effects from using the *blanket*, but for each consecutive night it is used (up to a maximum of seven), the *blanket* must have three days of non-use to recharge. After seven consecutive nights of use, the *blanket* loses all power for a full month, after which it works as detailed above.

The *blanket* is highly valued by anyone traveling long distances on foot, with the exception of holy pilgrims. (The *blanket* cheapens the religious value of their journey.)

XP Value: 750 **GP Value:** 3,750

Pillow of Perpetual Youth

The aging process of any creature sleeping on this *pillow* is halted for the entire time it is used (to a maximum of six hours in every twenty-four). This effectively slows the aging process by 25%, as six hours out of every day can pass without the entropic effects normally associated with the passage of time.

XP Value: 2,000 **GP Value:** 10,000

Pillow of Nightmares

Initially this *pillow* appears to be any one of the other types of magical pillows. After one week, however, it loses all magical properties. The last person to use the *pillow* then falls victim to its curse. That night the victim wakes 1 turn after falling asleep, having suffered a terrifying nightmare.

From then on, anytime the victim falls asleep he awakens 1 turn later, shaken with terror. Rather than face the nightmares, the individual lies awake all night, feigning sleep to avoid attracting attention to his problem. At the DM's discretion, a Wisdom check could allow the character to realize that the lack of sleep has an adverse affect, or the situation can be resolved through roleplaying.

The first two sleepless nights leave the character irritable and upset, but able to function normally the next day.

The third sleepless night results in a functional drop of 2 points to all ability scores due to weariness and fatigue. Each successive night results in a further loss of 2 points from each ability score, though an ability can never drop below 3.

As soon as any ability score reaches a functional level of 3, the individual enters a state of extreme sleep deprivation. In this state the character can perform only the most basic physical and mental tasks, such as walking, eating, and providing one-word answers to questions. The affected character cannot engage in combat, cast spells, ride a horse, or even converse intelligently. Once in this state, the character must make a successful saving throw vs. poison every twenty-four hours to avoid dying from complete exhaustion.

The *pillow* affects only one individual at a time and is completely harmless to others while the current victim is under the spell. During this time it has no special powers and does not radiate magic. At the death of the first victim, the *pillow* regains the powers it originally had, appearing as one of the noncursed magical pillows. After one week, its curse comes into effect again.

Destroying the *pillow* is the only way to break the cycle, but any victim currently cursed is not saved. Once the process has started, only a *remove curse*, *limited wish*, or *wish* spell can save the person.

Note that the drop in ability scores is temporary. If the curse is lifted, scores are restored at a rate of 1 point to each ability for every six hours of uninterrupted sleep. A recovering character sleeps up to eighteen hours in any given twenty-four-hour period if given the chance.

XP Value: Nil **GP Value:** 2,000

Pillow of Magic Restoration

When this item is used by a Mage or Specialist Wizard, each full hour of uninterrupted sleep (to a maximum of six hours per day) on this *pillow* restores one randomly chosen spell cast during the previous twenty-four hours to the Wizard's mind. The *pillow* does not restore the necessary material components, so the restored spells could prove useless if the caster does not have more of the appropriate materials on hand.

The *pillow* works for all casters of Wizard spells, but only if they sleep before studying to regain spells. It does not work for Cleric or Druid spells, as these are regained through prayer, meditation, and the grace of the appropriate deity.

XP Value: 2,000 **GP Value:** 10,000

Pillow of Dream Traveling

One hour after a character falls asleep on this *pillow*, an entity known as a dream scout appears in the dreams of the sleeper as a shadowy, featureless figure. Completely undetectable except to the sleeper, the scout is a willing servant to whoever uses the *pillow*.

Although unconscious, the sleeper is in a state of lucid dreaming and can give up to three simple directions to the dream scout (i.e., head east for fifteen minutes, then north for thirty, then southeast for fifteen). The scout begins its journey, accurately observing and recording everything it encounters with the senses of an ordinary human for a maximum of one hour. After the hour has expired, the scout instantaneously returns to the *pillow* and makes a full report to the sleeper. (The report is given at the speed of thought and takes less than a second to complete.)

The scout moves at a rate of 48 over any surface and passes through any physical barriers as if they did not exist. It is in no way detectable in, affected by, or able to affect the "real" world.

If the sleeper awakens before the scout has returned, or if the *pillow* is destroyed or moved more than a few feet from its original starting point, the scout becomes forever lost and the *pillow* loses all its magical properties.

XP Value: 1,000 **GP Value:** 5,000

Drew has recently escaped the horrors of the working world, seeking refuge in the academic realm where he is pursuing a Masters degree in English while questing for the quasi-mythical title of "Freelance Writer Earning a Living." His heroic rescue can be attributed to his new wife, Jennifer, and her mystical ability to support an unemployed spouse on her income.

Join the forces of good and evil as they battle to possess the Crystal!

Fantasy of the Crystal Chess Set

Remarkably detailed pewter sculptures; chessboard included at no extra charge!

A sparkling crystal adorns each playing piece!

Discover the magic world of the *Fantasy of the Crystal!* A world of mystical characters—all battling to capture the power of the Crystal and make it their own!

Exquisitely crafted.

Whether you join Melda, the Witch Queen...or side with wizards and warlocks, this exquisite chess set will keep you spellbound.

Each piece is crafted of lustrous, antiqued pewter and features an extraordinary level of detail. A sparkling, multi-faceted cut crystal adorns each playing piece. The elegant hardwood chessboard contains a convenient storage compartment, and is included at ***no extra charge.***

Superb value.

Created exclusively for the Danbury Mint, the ***Fantasy of the Crystal Chess Set*** comes with an exciting booklet describing the characters and their battle for mastery of the Crystal. Each piece is attractively priced at just $19.95 (plus any applicable sales tax and $2.95 shipping and handling). You will receive playing pieces at the rate of two every other month. You need pay for only one piece per month. Your satisfaction is guaranteed. Return your Reservation Application today!

Chessboard shown much smaller than actual size of 18½" x 18½" x 3".

Pieces shown smaller than actual size.

the Danbury Mint

© MBI

RESERVATION APPLICATION

The Danbury Mint
47 Richards Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06857

Send no money now.

Fantasy of the Crystal Chess Set

Yes! Please accept my reservation for the ***Fantasy of the Crystal Chess Set***, as described in this announcement.

Name: _____
Please Print Clearly

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Signature: _____
Orders subject to acceptance.

Name to print on Certificate of Registration (if different from above).

Allow 2 to 4 weeks after payment for initial shipment. 1001EDR2

PC Portraits

Halfbreeds

by Matt Mitchell

"The most extreme creatures and people are the most fun to draw, and there are some wierd combinations presented here," says Matt. "I hope the readers don't mind stretching the rules a bit and can figure ways to play these characters."

YOU WILL SURVIVE ON GRUEL

ESCAPE TORTUROUS CONFINEMENT

BEAT BACK FANATIC CULTISTS

AND FINALLY RECLAIM

YOUR POSSESSIONS FROM THE MAW OF OBLIVION

And that's just at the airport.

Explore the world's largest gaming convention with 30,000 fellow players. Thousands of events and vendors. Twenty-four-hour gaming.

Call (800) 529-EXPO to receive your registration packet, or register on the Web at <www.andonunlimited.com>.

gen32-rpg-1

1999 GEN CON® GAME FAIR

Everything's an adventure.

August 5–8, 1999
Midwest Express Center
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

ANDON UNLIMITED is a trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. **Gen Con** is a registered trademark of TSR, Inc. TSR, Inc. is a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©1999 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

What Do You Mean We Lost?

Here's how to keep from losing a good campaign after the heroes have been thrashed.

by Raff Notaro

illustrated by Jim Crabtree

PERHAPS THINGS DID NOT GO QUITE AS PLANNED. The Wizard uncharacteristically failed a saving throw vs. spell and expired early. Without the Wizard's support, the Fighters were overwhelmed. The Thief became a blade warmer after he was discovered moving in to backstab. The Cleric was taken out by a lucky shot.

Or maybe the battle went just as you thought it would. Your master villains led the PCs into an ambush. Now, thanks to your tactical brilliance, you have succeeded in teaching your upstart PCs that there are still enemies in this realm that cannot be beaten as easily as an everyday band of orcs.

Either way, the scene closes with the victorious bad guys standing over the last of our heroes with weapons poised, ready to finish off the dazed combatant. The poor adventurer's final glimpse is of the bodies of the other PCs lying broken and bleeding on the floor.

Can't you just hear your players' protests and cries of disbelief? How could this have happened? There must be some mistake.

This situation is often particularly traumatic for players with mid-level characters who have advanced quickly thanks to an uninterrupted string of victories. Even for groups that have been forced to retreat before, an out-and-out defeat can be devastating. The thought of being helpless before their archenemies will have many players rolling up new characters before the final blow falls.

Many times, without immediate intervention, the group would be history. Heroes who have been successful up to this point often refuse to accept defeat until the last character goes down, leaving no one to tend the fallen. Under these circumstances, feelings of hopelessness are justified.

Unless you don't mind having your campaign come to a sudden end, you must find a way to get your PCs out of this mess. The DM who uses an implausible solution to this problem does so at the peril of the campaign. A common (and poor) explanation is to say that it was all a dream. As unlikely as this scenario seems, it does allow the campaign to continue.

However, the dream scenario, or any unconvincing explanation, can make a poor impression upon the players. You don't want them to think that, when something doesn't go the way the DM planned, the rules are suspended. Nor do you want them thinking that they are entitled to a "do over" whenever they

are trounced. The key to smoothing out this rub in your campaign is employing a plausible scenario.

The most plausible scenarios used to follow up such a defeat are those based on the personality and motivation of the victorious adversaries. What would villains such as these do with the PCs once they had defeated them? Greedy villains might hold the heroes for ransom. Cruel villains might save the heroes for torture. Survival scenarios based on the motivations of the villains are far more plausible than those unrelated to the villains.

The PCs may have encountered these villains in the past. Recurring enemies are often central to a campaign, and they require a depth of character that your "disposable" villains do not. If the victorious adversaries are not recurring NPCs, they should probably become such. After a major defeat like this, the PCs will want an opportunity to settle the grudge. Therefore, treat these villains as you would your major NPCs and flesh them out with personality and motivation.

The survival of the PCs might not be as hard to explain if the enemy is not of Evil alignment. Good- or even Neutral-aligned enemies, under some circumstances, might believably stop short of killing their adversaries. Regardless of alignment, adversaries might have good reasons to keep the heroes alive. These reasons determine the situation in which the PCs find themselves after the defeat. The following examples are just a few of the scenarios you can invent as plausible continuations of the story line.

Traitors Among Them

The PCs could wake to discover that their lives have been spared due to the presence of traitors among the forces of the adversary. Evil leaders are notoriously bad at personnel management. The resentful underlings are always ready to exploit an opportunity to foul things up for their boss.

A nearly dead group of heroes would not demand the attentions of the person in charge. A task as simple as applying the coup-de-grace, or as distasteful as disposing of the corpses, would naturally be left to the help. Unsupervised, these bitter subordinates, especially if planning on absconding to avoid reprimands, would allow the heroes to live as a way to spite their master.

Vindictive henchmen might betray their masters by letting the heroes live.

As an alternative to the vindictive servants, you might use sympathetic or incompetent servants. The end is the same, more or less. Those charged with the responsibility of the heroes might have a change of heart and decide that they cannot murder the helpless characters. Or perhaps these individuals just botch the job by doing something like dumping them into the lair of a beast who is not at home or not hungry. This could provide the PCs with an unhampered escape or at least with a second chance to save themselves.

Intervention

The lives of the PCs could be spared because of the actions of a third party. Allies of the PCs, other enemies of the PCs' adversary, or even allies of the adversary could all intercede on the PCs' behalf. The precise motivation for this intervention naturally takes different forms depending on the third party's relationship with the PCs.

If the PCs are saved by an ally, then the situation is probably clear cut. Even adventurers can make friends who would rather have them alive than dead. Things could become more elaborate, however. The rescuer could be in debt to the PCs and might save them to even the score. If there is no previous debt, the PCs might now be the ones indebted. A rescuing knight might reasonably expect loyalty in return for help. A rescuing Thief might now expect compliance.

If the PCs are saved by the villain's enemies, these rescuers might merely want more people on their side against a common foe. It is often said that the enemy of your enemy is your friend. Since victory over an opponent often involves the division of treasure, however, these comrades in arms might be on the PCs' side only temporarily. After gaining the PCs' trust, these new allies

might desert at a critical moment to allow the PCs to engage the enemy while the "allies" collect the spoils.

Even allies of the enemy might intervene on behalf of the PCs. Although these individuals are associates of the villain, they might have their own agenda. The plans of these associates can take many forms and might be unknown to the PCs' adversary. One scheme might be to hold the PCs in reserve so that they can finish off the villains when the associates feel the villains have outlived their usefulness.

Imprisonment

Waking up in prison would be judged by most to be preferable to not waking up at all. Several types of adversaries might justify the use of this scenario as a way to follow up the characters' defeat. The "kind," the "vengeful," and the "cautious" are three such types.

If your villains are not completely ruthless, then simple humanity might prevent them from slaughtering the heroes. Perhaps an alignment conflict prevents such an act. A Warriors' creed might not allow such action against a helpless opponent. However, compassion of this sort would be ludicrous on the part of certain types of adversaries.

For those villains without such character "flaws" as compassion, cruelty might serve as the motivation for imprisonment. A quick death after a good fight might be too honorable an end to allow one's opponents. It's much more suitable—and satisfying—to see them wallow in a dank cell for a few years, slowly wasting away amid the filth and vermin. Besides, prisoners make nice mementos from past campaigns.

If your villains are neither kind nor cruel, but calculating, they might not wish to dispose of the characters right away. Perhaps the characters could be of use. Once imprisoned, the characters can always be eliminated if they turn out to be of no value.

For a DM faced with the unexpected defeat of the PCs, imprisonment provides an immediate solution that can be developed later. The PCs can be told that the villain has something in store for them. Then the DM can go off and figure out just what that should be.

Information

If the villains have encountered the PCs before, or if the villains have otherwise gathered background information on the PCs, then they might know that some or all of the characters possess valuable information. If your campaign does not involve much intrigue, this information might be something as mundane as the location of valuable items that the PCs possess but do not have on their person at the time of their capture. Valuable items take many forms, and one person's trinket is another's treasure. Objects of religious significance, rare spell components, and books on esoterica might make a seemingly valueless hoard quite interesting to the right person.

If your campaign is home to political machinations, other sorts of information might be useful to participants of such games. Military intelligence, including troop placement and movements, size of forces, specifics regarding weaponry, and the location of stockpiles, is valuable to enemy forces. Subtle adversaries could make use of information such as a princess's regular bedtime, a jailer's favorite drink, or the menu for a royal feast.

It is not necessary that the players fully understand what value the information is to the enemy, but they should have a clue to make their survival more believable. Furthermore, even though it takes only one person to provide the information, the PCs' captors can't be sure who knows or who is likely to talk. Thus, preservation of the whole group can be justified.

Ransom

Even if the characters are not suspected of possessing items or information of value, they might still be worth keeping if they are valuable to someone else. This concerned party must be wealthy or else possess something the captors value. Knights and Priests often belong to larger organizations that might pay for the PCs' release. Mages might be of some sentimental significance to masters to whom they were once apprenticed. Even Thieves have parents. This scenario is simple if the characters are affiliated with some rich person or group. If the PC group is composed of serfs with swords, you'll need to be more creative. As mentioned above, you never know what an adversary considers valuable.

Slavery

Another reason why the PCs could be valuable is because they would make good slaves. If your villains are the industrious sort, you might wish to employ the slavery outcome. Warlords and others in charge of large operations use slaves for a variety of projects. Slaves can row galleys, mine ore, and construct defenses. Since slaves have a tendency to expire from exhaustion, replacements are always in demand.

Some slaves are also applied to more specialized and less arduous purposes. Even if physcially weak Mages would not be particularly useful moving slabs of granite, your villains still might have a use for them as scribes, food tasters, or members of a harem.

This slavery explanation works best when the adversaries are in control of vast resources like fleets, mines, and fortresses. However, even less well-appointed figures might wish to preserve the characters for this end. If slavery exists elsewhere in your campaign, then your villain might wish to sell the characters to someone who could put them to good use.

IF YOUR VILLAINS ARE NOT COMPLETELY RUTHLESS, then simple humanity might prevent them from slaughtering the heroes.

Forced Quest

Along the lines of slavery is the forced-quest scenario. In this outcome, the PCs have been spared so that they can carry out some (naturally, quite perilous) task. Perhaps they must retrieve an item from the lair of a dragon or assassinate a member of the royal family. Whatever foolhardy adventure their captors present to them, it is an assignment with little chance of success and one that would otherwise be costly in terms of materials and manpower. Masterful villains give the PCs strong incentive to perform their task and not simply to run off. Keeping hold of an important NPC or one of the PCs is an obvious means of keeping the rest of the PCs honest. A more creative method might be available to adversaries through magical means.

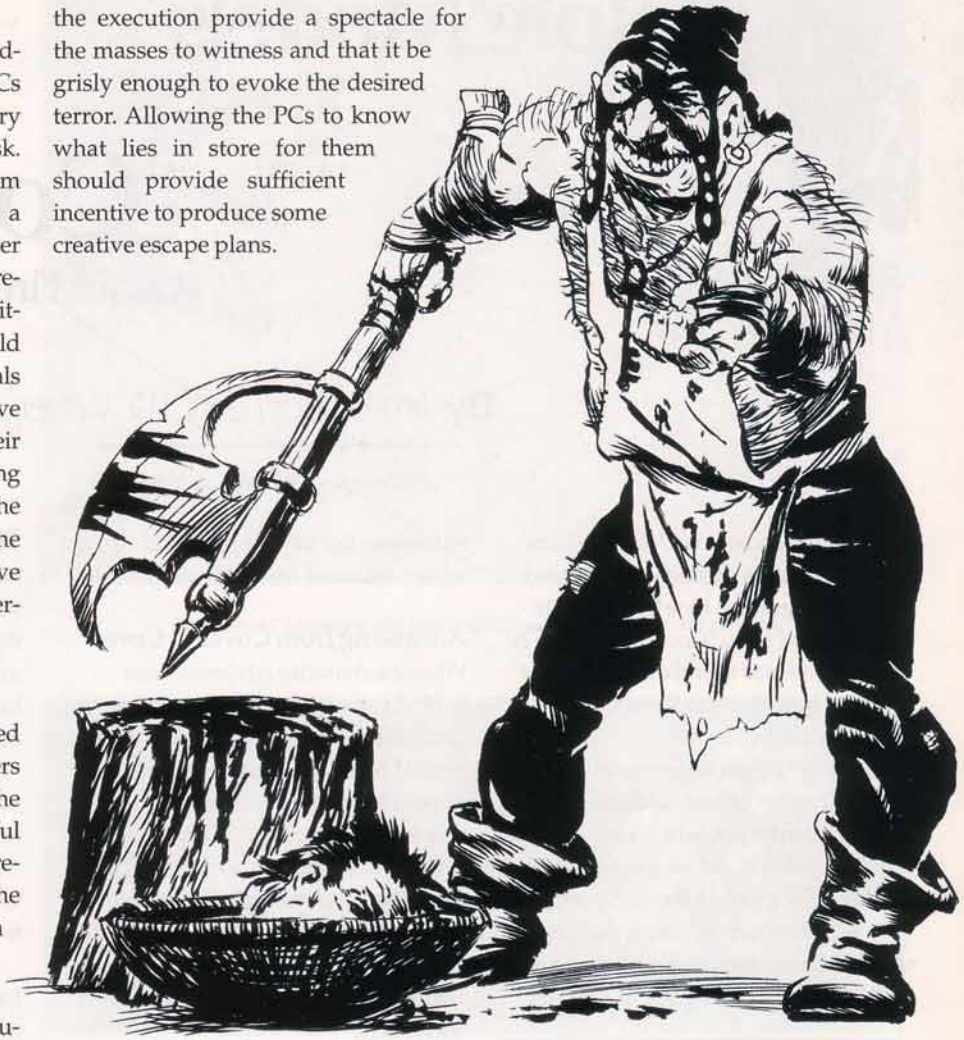
Religious Sacrifice

If the adversaries are somehow involved with an evil religion, the characters might be useful as human sacrifices. The PCs are likely to be much more powerful than run-of-the-mill villagers and therefore make more worthy sacrifices to the gods in question. Devotees to such faiths can accrue quite a bit of favor from the priesthood, not to mention the deities, as a result of such a contribution. If this option makes sense for your villains, the PCs would clearly be worth keeping around as prisoners. At that point, this scenario becomes another example of imprisonment.

Public Execution

If the adversaries have a political rather than a religious bent, then they can use the PCs as examples to any who might follow their lead. After all, if the PCs found the motivation to assault the villain, others might as well. Instead of waiting for these would-be heroes to attack, the shrewd villain might use the PCs to weaken their resolve. A gruesome public execution can provide an effective deterrent for impudent adventurers.

Drawing and quartering, crucifixion, and burning at the stake are just of few of the methods of execution that have been used as tools of intimidation by tyrants throughout history. Whatever manner is employed, it is essential that the execution provide a spectacle for the masses to witness and that it be grisly enough to evoke the desired terror. Allowing the PCs to know what lies in store for them should provide sufficient incentive to produce some creative escape plans.



Some archvillains will spare the heroes just long enough to make a public example of them.

Deathtrap

Particularly sadistic adversaries derive a great deal of satisfaction by watching their captives struggle in a deathtrap before they expire. Deathtraps can be something as simple as tossing the PCs into the web of a giant spider or as complex as a gauntlet with razor sharp pendulum blades, geysers of flame, and barrages of deadly projectiles. If your villains are particularly diabolical and ingenious, you can get quite creative with this scenario. Make it interesting, but don't make it easy. After all, the PCs are getting a second chance. They should have to earn it.

After the Fall

Nobody likes to lose, but sooner or later everybody does. When your PCs are thrashed, follow up with a plausible survival scenario. These scenarios, in addition to maintaining a believable plot line, present all kinds of opportunities for new adventures. Imprisoned characters can escape into lower dungeon levels, enslaved PCs can be transported to exotic locales, and forced quests and deathtraps can be adventures in themselves. Massive defeat might seem to be the end of the campaign, but in fact they are just the beginning.

Raff Notaro started gaming in 1984 and played regularly all through school, but the last campaign he was in ended abruptly when most of the players graduated. He lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he works as the Director of Financial Services for a cooperative student housing organization.

Role Models

Cover Me

Under Fire in the AD&D® Game

By Jim Bishop and J.D. Wiker

photography by Craig Cudnohufsky

It's a familiar scene on TV and in films: Two partners are pinned down behind their car by gunfire. One hero looks to the other and says, "Cover me." Then he races for the next island of safety, while the other hero fires madly to keep the bad guys down.

Advancing from one point of cover to another has never been addressed by the AD&D® game rules, which treat cover as a static condition, not a moment-to-moment advantage. Likewise, suppressive fire (the cover of "cover me") has no AD&D counterpart. You can add both of these tactics to your AD&D campaign with miniatures and a few simple rules.

Painting Detail

Although painting small areas of detail can be daunting for the beginner, practice and a technique called black lining can make it easier.

1. First paint the area of detail black. This will leave a thin black line to separate it from the rest of the figure.

2. Next, add the base coat to the area. This is easier than it looks.

3. Mix a slightly lighter version of the base color and carefully add it to any raised areas, edges, and corners. Use lighter shades of the color, not white paint, to lighten most colors.

As a last tip, be sure to rinse and reload the brush often. Acrylic paint dries quickly, and dry paint won't deliver smoothly to the figure. Gently rinse the brush in water every few minutes and dry it on a newspaper or paper towel before reloading it with fresh paint.

Advancing from Cover to Cover

What if a character advances from behind a shrubbery (50% concealment) to behind a stone pillar (90% cover) in 1 round? Should the character receive the –2 or –10 modifier to AC vs. missile attacks?

In the absence of other modifiers, the character should split the difference, receiving a –6 AC modifier. To reflect the situation more accurately, see the modifiers on **Table 1: Advancing Cover Modifiers.**

Example: A halfling (movement 6) is running from –4 cover to –8 cover that is 4 squares away. The character's base cover for the round is –6, modified +1 for speed and +0 for distance for a total modifier of –5. The halfling might not have tried the same charge into –4 cover, since the character's AC modifier would have dropped to just –3.

Suppressive Fire

Suppressive fire is another way to add variability and realism to a tabletop battlefield. Combatants frantically fire their missile weapons to prevent the enemy from firing back or from firing at advancing characters.

A character engaged in suppressive fire may not make any other actions that round, including conventional attacks, called shots, or movement. Any number of characters may engage in suppressive fire.

To determine which side has forced the other side down, just compare the number of suppressors on each side. The difference between the two values is then subtracted from the winning side's AC against missile weapons for the rest of the round. Note that this bonus is cumulative with the standard cover and visibility modifiers, and with the modifiers listed on **Table 1.**

Example: Our halfling from the first example is running from –4 cover to –4

From black to a base coat to a light drybrushing: three easy steps for detailing.

cover 9 squares away, for a total modifier of –2 to AC. The rest of the halfling's group, four strong, provides suppressive fire. Their enemy allocates only two spear-throwers to suppressive fire. The halfling's friends win the suppression test by a margin of two, improving the halfling's AC bonus by two for a –4 bonus.

Sample Scenario: Jailbreak

In this scenario, the PCs have freed a number of captives from a cage in the center of a huge throne room. They are discovered as they head for the exit, and must pass through a gauntlet of archers before they reach safety. To survive they'll need to use their combat smarts and every bit of available cover.

Luckily, there are three stone pillars (–4 cover) between them and the exit, spaced 8 squares apart. Unfortunately, the exhausted captives can only manage a movement rate of 6 squares per round, leaving them out in the open. Unless the party lays down suppressive fire, the captives won't live past the first round.

If the party provides suppressive fire, they automatically win the suppressive fire test (the enemy archers are intent on killing the captives, not pinning the party) and may add that full bonus (see above) to the captives' AC. This scenario clearly works best for a group at least four PCs strong, to ensure the captives a significant AC bonus.

Round	Events
1	They run 6 squares, falling just short of the first pillar. AC modifier: +1
2	They run 2 squares and take cover behind the first pillar. AC modifier: –2
3	They run 6 squares, falling just short of the second pillar. AC modifier: +1

Jim has dedicated the rest of his life to being the best darn object lesson he can be. JD designs material for the ALTERNITY® *game, which he's trying to convert to miniatures rules.*

Determining AC adjustments while advancing from cover to cover is easier with miniatures.

Table 1: Advancing Cover AC Modifiers

Situation	AC Modifier
Character moved 3 squares or fewer to cover	–1
Character moved 4–7 squares to cover	—
Character moved 8–12 squares to cover	+1
Character moved more than 12 squares to cover	+2
Character's movement rate is 6 squares or fewer	+1
Character's movement rate is 7–12 squares	—
Character's movement rate is more than 12 squares	–1

Suppressive fire improves the AC of an advancing character.

AMAZING® STORIES

First in the past. First in the future.

First to unite visions of the past with the stories of the future.

***AMAZING STORIES** magazine~ Your first choice for the best in science fiction.*

Charter subscribers save up to 50% off the cover price!

▼ *Fill out and mail with your payment to this address:*

NAME (*please print*)_____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE/PROV _____

COUNTRY _____ ZIP/POSTAL CODE _____

TELEPHONE (_____) _____ EMAIL _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT

☐ CHECK (payable to *Amazing Stories*)

☐ MASTERCARD ☐ VISA ☐ DISCOVER ☐ BILL ME (*must be 18 or over*)

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____

MC BANK NO. _____ EXPIRATION DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

To U.S. addresses
- ☐ 4 issues for $10.95
- ☐ 8 issues for $19.95
- ☐ 12 issues for $29.95

To Canadian addresses
- ☐ 4 issues for $14.95
- ☐ 8 issues for $29.95
- ☐ 12 issues for $44.95

To European addresses*
- ☐ 4 issues for £9.95 (4001H)
- ☐ 8 issues for £19.95 (8001M)
- ☐ 12 issues for £29.95 (1201J)

U.S. FUNDS ONLY

Amazing® Stories
Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
P.O. Box 469107
Escondido, CA 92046-9107
or fax: 619-738-4805

***Send European orders to:**
MRM Promotional Services Ltd.
P.O. Box 503
Leicester
LE94 DAD
United Kingdom
Phone: 44-185-841-0510

For fast service, email us at amazing@pcspublink.com.

For credit card orders, call 1-800-395-7760 (M–F 9AM–5PM PST) and mention code AAS98

All prices are subject to change without notice. Subscription offer expires 7/1/99

Amazing is a registered trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. © 1998 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved. Illustration by Bob Eggleton.

Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines must be observed.

To ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short and succinct.

The information given in the listing must include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held
2. Site and location
3. Address(es) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

Warning: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the first Monday of each month, four months prior to the on sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the December issue is the first Monday of September. Announcements for all conventions must be mailed to: "Conventions," *DRAGON® Magazine*, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA, 98055, U.S.A.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to the magazine editors at (425) 254-2262 (U.S.A.).

Important: *DRAGON Magazine* does not publish phone numbers for conventions. Be certain that any address you send us is complete and correct.

To ensure that your convention listing makes it into our files, enclose a self-addressed stamped postcard with your first convention notice; we will return the card to show that it was received. You also might send a second notice one week after mailing the first. Mail your listing as early as possible, and always keep us informed of any changes. Please do not send convention notices by fax, as this method has not proven reliable.

❖ Australian convention
※ Canadian convention
✪ European convention
💻 Online convention

Convention Calendar

May

Fantasy Fair Nine

May 9 ✪

The Cresset Exhibition, Bretton, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, UK.
Contact: The Hallards, Eaton Socon, St. Neots, Cambridgeshire, U.K., PE19 3QW.

Patriot Games 99

May 20–23 VA

Holiday Inn Central, Richmond, VA.
Email: VRPAques@aol.com
Website: members.home.net:80/village6/page3.html

KelCon 1

May 28–30 ※

North Campus, Okanagan University College, Kelowna BC.
Contact: KelCon, 1720 Blondeaux Crescent, Kelowna, BC, Canada V1Y 4J7.
Email: rook@cnx.net

June

Milwaukee Summer Revel III

June 10–13 WI

The Best Western Inn, Milwaukee, WI.
Contact: Bruce Rabe, P.O. Box 779, New Munster, WI 53152.
Website: www.rli-net.net/~melka/msr/index.htm

July

UK Games Fest

July 3 ✪

The Sportcentre, Harlow, Essex, UK.
Contact: Jan Eldridge, The Dashes, Harlow, Essex CM20 3RZ.
Email: uk_games.fest@virgin.net

ManaFest '99

July 9–11 CA

South San Francisco Conference Center, Sounth San Francisco, CA.
Contact: ManaFest, P.O. Box 170436, San Francisco, CA.
Website: www.manfest.com
Email: info@manafest.com

Gamers Guide

35% Off with no Minimums!
GAMES WORKSHOP & Citadel Miniatures

Complete line in stock and ready to ship! Free monthly catalog. Huge inventory, order by phone, fax, e-mail or postal service weekdays or weekends. Visa, Mastercard, Discover, Amex, Check or Money Order. Call Discount Hobby 1-8pm Eastern at 616-344-1818 noon till 6 on Sundays. You pay exact U.P.S. shipping charges. Fax 616-344-0448 e-mail JDLauck@aol.com In business since 1985! 3307 S. Westnedge Ave Kalamazoo, Mi. 49008 U.S.A.

SEEKING OUT-OF-PRINT MODULES?

the hit pointe

http://www.hitpointe.com

Mail-Order Game Shoppe
Specializing in Used and Out-of-Print D&D® and AD&D® game products

No computer? Write for current price list:

185 N Park Blvd Suite 331, Lake Orion MI 48362

PAPER MAYHEM

"The Informative PBM Magazine"

Paper Mayhem has been leading the way for over 13 years by informing people about PBM gaming. Articles, reviews, biographies, PBM game & company ratings and more fill each bimonthly issue.

So why delay and miss out on all the fun? Read Paper Mayhem and take advantage of PBM gaming.

US Subscriptions: Single issue $5.00
1 year $24.00 - 2 year $42.00

Send subscriptions to: PAPER MAYHEM
Dept DA, 1518 Adams St.
Ottawa, IL 61350-4770

DANCING DRAGON CATALOG

Now two convenient ways to shop
CALL 800-322-6040

ONLINE
www.dancing-dragon.com
with online specials and promotions

free request your catalog today

D&D®'s Greatest Hits

You're older. You're wiser.
So what happened back there
in the CHAPEL OF EVIL CHAOS?

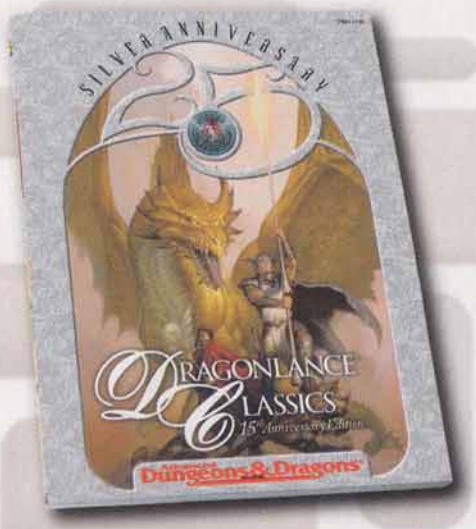
And who knew KRYNN would be
just as FORSAKEN
after all this time—what with the
DRAGONS and the FIRE
and the SCREAMING.

The PAIN.

The **Dungeons & Dragons**® adventure game engendered a new chapter in gaming.

Twenty-five years later, TSR is celebrating its Silver Anniversary with the re-release of the finest roleplaying products ever produced.

It's all coming back to you.



Return to KRYNN.

Blaze new trails across Krynn's dragon-blasted domain, or recreate the storyline of the original *Chronicles* trilogy with the Silver Anniversary edition of the ***Dragonlance***® *Classics.* Fifteen years ago, the **Dragonlance** adventure cycle redefined roleplaying. Now Krynn is back and untold adventure awaits.

Return to the KEEP.

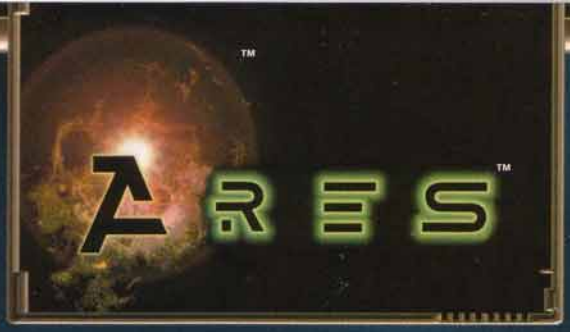
Rediscover the Caves of Chaos . . . if you dare. This Silver Anniversary presentation of the famous Gary Gygax **D&D** adventure expands on of one of the most compelling adventures of all time.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

TIME TO PLAY.

Questions? Call (800) 324-6496, or visit our website at ‹**www.tsr.com**›.

TSR, **D&D**, **Dungeons & Dragons**, **Dragonlance**, and the Silver Anniversary logo are trademarks of TSR, Inc. TSR, Inc. is a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©1999 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.



The weapons of *Fallout 2* for the ALTERNITY® game

ARMED & DANGEROUS

By Bruce R. Cordell

Illustrated by Black Isle Studios

Radiation seeped from the wounded earth. The crater was cracked and old, but still hot enough to peg the rusty Geiger counter. Gamma radiation is typical for craters found in the Wastes; most of them mark the graves of cities destroyed in a rain of nuclear fire almost two hundred years ago.

I popped my last Rad-X, hoping it would protect me from excessive exposure as I explored the floor of the pit. Thankfully, I'd had sense enough to barter a couple inhalers of Jet for a long coil of sturdy rope. I made it to the bottom of the crater with little trouble.

"Damn it, Cassidy, get down here," I yelled up to my traveling companion. "There are tunnels all through the strata!" Indeed, though hidden from the crater's lip, low tunnels branched away at floor level in all directions, all of them dark and undoubtedly dangerous.

Not bothering to hold the rope for Cassidy, I unholstered the YK32 Pulse Pistol. Booty from a derelict Vault, the shiny pistol was my claim to fame. With it in hand, I knew that there were few threats in all the Wastes that I couldn't face down. Now all I needed to find was a big stash of the energy cells the pistol was so greedy for…

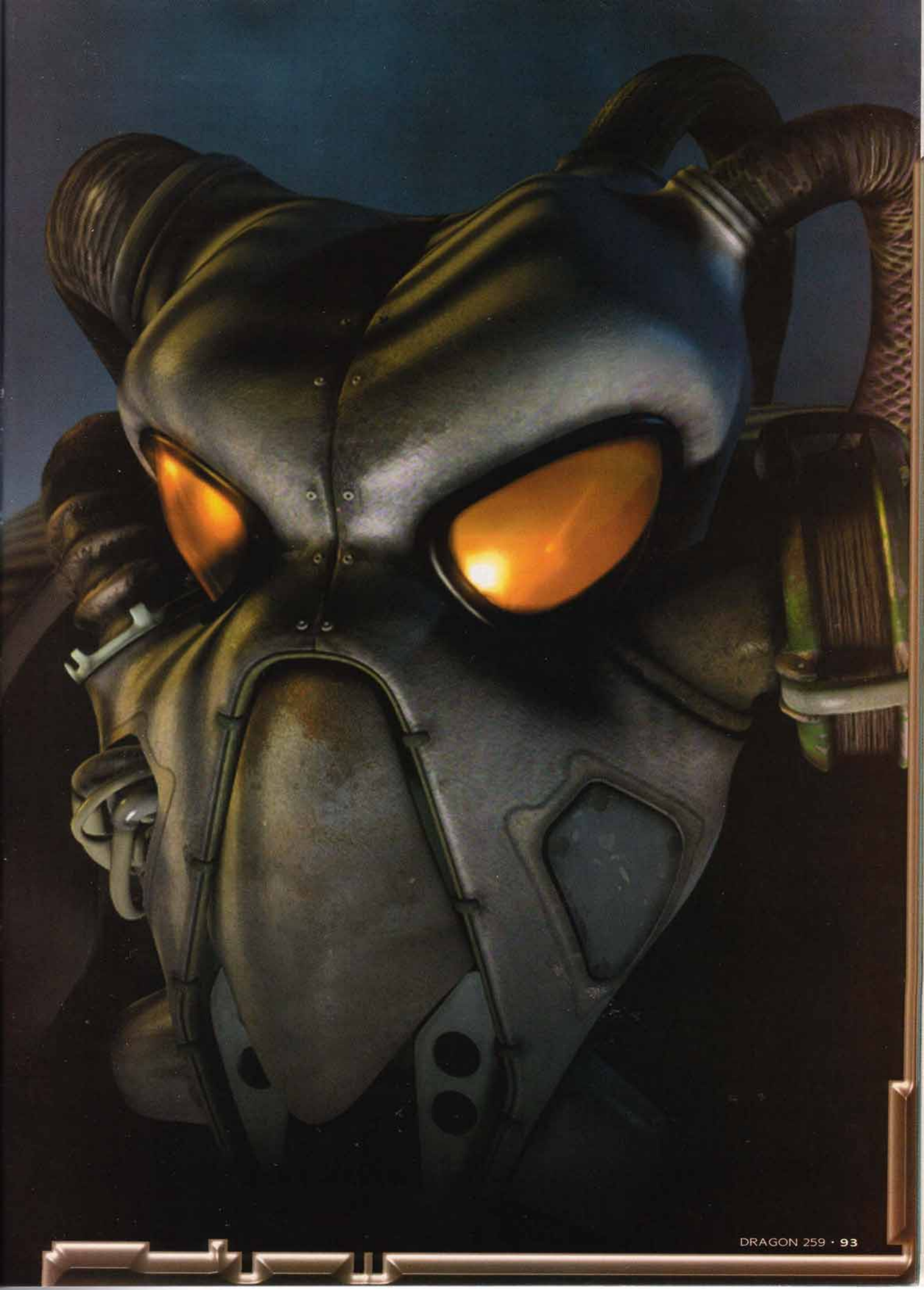
I heard the clicking before I saw the glow. It came out of the largest tunnel, the one that I suspected was once part of an old-time sewer. Half metal and half flesh, the creature moved faster than anything I'd ever seen, and it was coming right at me. I knew in an instant it was kill or be killed. I raised the YK32 and fired an arc of electric death at the behemoth, hoping and praying that the weapon would protect me in this, my moment of need.

FALLOUT 2

Fallout 2 © 1999 Interplay Productions.

is the anticipated sequel to the *Fallout* computer roleplaying game from Interplay. *Fallout* and its sequel describe a world that has survived—barely—the nightmare of full-scale nuclear war. Most of the world was utterly devastated during the war. Ecosystems failed, and life on Earth was pushed to the brink. However, self-contained Vaults were prepared against just such a catastrophe, and entire generations lived and died, sheltered below the surface in sealed havens. They waited for the worst of the fallout and hard radiation to fade.

Now, the Vaults are beginning to open. Humans must move from their havens into a harsh new world where life is a commodity. Those who would survive must find new ways to eke out life in the blasted Wastes. Worse, they must defend themselves from the degraded remnants of humanity and mutants that survived the war without the benefit of a protective Vault. Like food and water, weapons are now a necessity of life.



THE WEAPONS OF *FALLOUT 2*

Weapon	Skill	Mode	Acc	Range	Type	Damage (O/G/A)
POWER FIST, SPIKED	Unarmed—*brawl*	n/a	0	Personal	LI/O	d6+1s/d6w/d6+2w
SUPER SLEDGE	Melee—*powered*	n/a	0	Personal	LI/O	d8+2s/d6+2w/d8+2w
CATTLE PROD	Melee—*powered*	n/a	0	Personal	En/O	d8s/d4+2w/d6+2w
RIPPER	Melee—*powered*	n/a	+1	Personal	LI/G	d4+1w/d6+2w/d4+1m
10MM AUTOMATIC	Mod—*pistol*	F/B	0	6/12/40	HI/O	d4w/d4+1w/d4m
.44 MAGNUM REVOLVER	Mod—*pistol*	F	0	6/12/50	HI/O	d4+2w/d4+3w/d4+2m
DESERT EAGLE	Mod—*pistol*	F	0	6/12/50	HI/O	d4+1w/d4+2w/d4+1m
14MM AUTOMATIC	Mod—*pistol*	F/B	0	10/20/60	HI/O	d6+1w/d6+2w/d6+1m
9MM MAUSER	Mod—*pistol*	F	0	6/12/50	HI/O	d4w/d4+1w/d4m
NEEDLER	Mod—*pistol*	F	–1	8/16/40	LI/O	1w/d4–1w/d6w*
.223 AUTOLOADER	Mod—*pistol*	F	–1	8/20/65	HI/O	d6+1w/d6+2w/d6m
PPK12 GAUSS	Mod—*pistol*	F	0	10/20/100	En/G	2d4w/2d4+1w/d4+3m
RED RYDER BB GUN	Mod—*rifle*	F	+2	4/8/16	LI/O	1s/d4–1s/1w
PIPE RIFLE	Mod—*rifle*	F	+1	30/60/150	HI/O	d4+1s/d4w/d4m
HUNTING RIFLE	Mod—*rifle*	F	–1	40/80/240	HI/O	d6w/d8+1w/d6m
SNIPER RIFLE	Mod—*rifle*	F	–2	50/100/300	HI/O	d4+2w/d6+2w/d4+1m
ASSAULT RIFLE	Mod—*rifle*	F/B/A	0	60/120/300	HI/O	d4+2w/d6+3w/d4+1m
H&K G11	Mod—*rifle*	F/B/A	0	40/80/200	HI/O	d4+2w/d6+2w/d4+1m
M72 GAUSS RIFLE	Mod—*rifle*	F/B	0	80/200/500	HI/G	d4+4w/2d4+2w/2d4m
SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN	Mod—*rifle*	F	–1	4/8/16	HI/O	d4w/d6+1w/d4+1m
COMBAT SHOTGUN	Mod—*rifle*	F/B	0	6/12/30	HI/O	d4w/d6+1w/d4+2m
H&K CAWS	Mod—*rifle*	F/B	0	8/16/40	HI/O	d4w/d6+1w/d4+2m
PANCOR JACKHAMMER	Mod—*rifle*	F/B/A	0	10/20/60	HI/G	d4w/d6+1w/d4+2m
10MM SMG	Mod—*SMG*	F/B/A	0	10/20/80	HI/O	d4+1w/d4+2w/d4+1m
TOMMY GUN	Mod—*SMG*	F/B/A	0	12/24/80	HI/O	d4+1w/d6+2w/d6+1m
H&K P90C	Mod—*SMG*	F/B/A	0	15/30/100	HI/O	d4+2w/d6+2w/d6+2m
M3A1 GREASE GUN	Mod—*SMG*	F/B/A	0	10/20/80	HI/O	d4+2w/d6+2w/d6+2m
M60	Hvy—*direct*	B/A	0	100/400/1000	HI/G	d6w/d6+3w/d6m
MINIGUN	Hvy—*direct*	A	–1	100/400/1000	HI/G	d4+1w/2d4w/d6m
AVENGER MINIGUN	Hvy—*direct*	A	–1	110/420/1040	HI/G	d4+2w/2d4+1w/d6+1m
VINDICATOR MINIGUN	Hvy—*direct*	A	–1	120/440/1100	HI/G	d6+2w/2d4+3w/d6+3m
H&K G11E	Hvy—*direct*	F/B/A	–1	110/420/1040	HI/G	d6+2w/2d4+2w/d8m
FLAMETHROWER	Hvy—*direct*	F	0	6/12/30	En/G	d6+1w/d8+3w/d8+4w
ROCKET LAUNCHER	Hvy—*direct*	F	0	1000/2000/4000	HI/G	d4+1w/d6+2w/d4+2m
LASER PISTOL	Mod—*pistol*	F	–1	20/40/200	En/G	d6+1w/d6+2w/d4+1m
SOLAR SCORCHER	Mod—*pistol*	F	0	15/30/100	En/O**	d6+1w/d6+2w/d6+1m
LASER RIFLE	Mod—*rifle*	F	–1	100/400/1000	En/G	d6+1w/d6++3w/d6+2m
GATLING LASER	Hvy—*direct*	F/B	0	80/300/600	En/G	d6+1w/d6+2w/d4+1m
ALIEN LASER PISTOL	Mod—*pistol*	F	0	6/12/30	En/G	d6+2w/2d4+2w/d4+2m
YK32 PULSE PISTOL	Mod—*pistol*	F	–1	40/80/300	En/G	d6+2w/d8+2w/d6+1m
YK42B PULSE RIFLE	Mod—*rifle*	F	–1	100/200/400	En/A	d6+2w/d8+2w/2d6+4m
PLASMA PISTOL	Mod—*pistol*	F	0	40/80/300	En/G	d6w/d6+1w/d6m
PLASMA RIFLE	Hvy—*direct*	F	0	50/100/400	En/G	d8w/d8+2w/d6+3m
TURBO PLASMA RIFLE	Hvy—*direct*	F	0	80/300/600	En/G	d8+1w/d8+4w/2d6m

*Needler cartridges are produced with a variety of hypodermic charges. The needles alone cause the damage listed. For the effects of poisoned needles, see Table G17: Poison in the *ALTERNITY Gamemaster Guide*.

**The solar scorcher magnifies and collates ambient sunlight for energy; in the absence of full daylight, the scorcher doesn't work.

Hide	Actions	Ammo	Clip Size	Clip Cost	Mass	Cost
—	4	energy cell	50	$125	2	$2,220
—	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	4	$3,750
—	3	energy cell	10	$25	1.5	$600
—	2	energy cell	25	$62	4	$900
+2	4	10mm	30/3	$50	2	$250
+1	3	.44	6	$6	1	$600
+1	3	.44	12	$12	1	4,800
+1	3	14mm	20/2	$60	2	$1,100
+2	4	9mm	20	$40	1	$300
+3	3	hypo*	20	$100	1	$2,300
+1	4	.223	20	$60	2	$3,500
+2	3	2mm EC	10	$150	1.5	$4,500
+1	2	BBs	100	$10	2	$200
—	2	10mm	10	$16	5	$200
—	2	.223	20	$60	5	$1,000
—	2	.223	6	$18	5	$2,200
—	4	5mm	30/10	$100	3	$1,300
—	4	4.7 caseless	30/10	$200	2	$6,500
—	2	2mm EC	30/3	$150	4	$8,250
+1	2	12 gauge	5	$15	3	$600
—	2	12 gauge	10/3	$30	3.5	$2,750
+1	2	12 gauge	10/3	$30	3	$4,750
—	3	12 gauge	20/6	$60	4	$5,550
—	3	10mm	30/10	$50	3	$1,000
—	3	.223	30/10	$90	4	$1,200
—	4	10mm	30/10	$50	3.5	$1,700
—	4	.44	30/10	$30	3	$2,500
—	2	7.62mm	—/10	$100	16	$3,500
—	2	5mm	40/10	$130	18	$3,800
—	2	5mm	40/10	$130	20	$5,500
—	2	5mm	40/10	$130	22	$8,500
—	3	4.7 caseless	30/10	$200	16	$7,000
—	2	fuel	10	$200	22	$2,000
—	1	rocket	1	$1000	18	$2,300
+3	4	energy cell	20	$50	1	$1,400
+2	4	none**	n/a	n/a	2	$2,000
—	4	fusion cell	20	$200	3	$5,000
—	2	fusion cell	30/10	$350	16	$7,500
+3	4	energy cell	40	$100	1	$10,000
+2	4	energy cell	15	$150	2	$8,500
—	3	energy cell	30	$300	4	$12,500
+2	4	energy cell	20	$200	2	$2,750
—	2	fusion cell	10	$100	14	$4,000
—	2	fusion cell	10	$100	20	$6,000

How To Read the Weapon Table

Weapon: The common name of the weapon.

Skill: The name (often abbreviated) of the skill a character needs to avoid using the weapon untrained.

Acc: Accuracy, an optional rule. A number other than 0 indicates that a bonus or a penalty is applied to the wielder's skill check to account for the weapon's accuracy.

Md: Mode, not applicable to melee weapons. This column indicates whether a weapon fires a single shot per phase (F), a burst (B), or is capable of autofire (A). If the weapon can be operated in more than one mode, then the user can decide which one he wishes to employ. For more information, see "Automatic Weapon Attack Modes" on page 74 in the ALTERNITY *Player's Handbook*.

Range: The weapon's range, expressed as "Personal" for melee weapons and as a series of numbers for ranged weapons. The numbers represent short/medium/long range in meters.

Type: The first listing describes the form of damage the weapon inflicts: low impact (LI), high impact (HI), or energy (En). The second list describes the weapon's firepower: Ordinary (O), Good (G), or Amazing (A). If a weapon's firepower is inferior to the toughness of armor, any damage the weapon inflicts is degraded one category (e.g., mortal damage becomes wound damage, etc.).

Damage: The amount of damage a weapon inflicts. Format is Ordinary/Good/Amazing, and the appropriate damage is applied depending on the result of the wielder's skill check.

Hide: The penalty applied to an opponent's Awareness–*perception* check to spot the weapon. A listing of "–" indicates that the weapon cannot be concealed.

Actions: An optional rule. The number of times that a weapon can be used in a single round.

Ammo: The type of ammunition, be it ball, slug, energy, or fusion cell, necessary to fire the weapon.

Clip Size: For powered melee weapons, this number is equal to the number of hits the weapon can strike before its charge is gone. For ranged weapons, energy weapons, and heavy weapons, this number describes how many shots a weapon can fire before its clip or cell is exhausted. A number after the slash mark (/) indicates the number of bursts that may be fired from a full single clip. Generally, each use of a weapon in burst mode expends one burst (three shots) of ammunition, while each use of autofire mode expends three bursts. A dash to the left of the slash mark indicates that the weapon can't be used in single-shot mode.

Clip Cost: The average cost of a clip of the appropriate ammunition, according to Fallout barter-cash prices. These prices are not necessarily commensurate with ALTERNITY prices for similar weapons.

Mass: The weapon's mass, in kilograms.

Cost: The average price a warrior of the wasteland can expect to pay either in gold or barter when wandering the blasted landscape after the Fallout. These prices are not necessarily commensurate with ALTERNITY game prices for similar weapons.

FALLOUT 2 WEAPONS FOR THE ALTERNITY® GAME

The ALTERNITY game rules are uniquely suited for use in any roleplaying setting that blends archaic and superscience aspects. Gamemasters with the inclination could run a post-holocaust campaign based on the story of *Fallout* using the ALTERNITY game , but whether your game is modern, futuristic, or somewhere in between, you can enhance the arsenal with these ALTERNITY game statistics for the weapons of *Fallout 2*.

POWER FIST, SPIKED: This metal gauntlet delivers a powerful kinetic boost from a small energy cell with every punch. The weight of the metal gauntlet, the spikes, and the inertial boost provided by the energy cell combine to create a weapon feared by all who must face it in close combat.

SUPER SLEDGE: It is hypothesized that super sledgehammers (developed before the war) contain hollow shafts filled with mercury or some other metallic liquid. Whatever the truth, anyone struck by a super sledge is guaranteed to be knocked silly.

CATTLE PROD: In the hands of a skilled martial-artist, the simple cattle prod becomes a deadly weapon. Powered by a small energy cell, a successful strike jolts the foe with too many volts for comfort.

RIPPER: A Ripper vibroblade is powered by a small energy cell. The chain blade rips and tears foes, causing more damage than a normal blade.

10MM AUTOMATIC: A common weapon of the Wastes, the 10mm automatic pistol is capable of single and burst mode. The pistol is a popular choice because of the relatively large amount of 10mm ammo that has survived.

.44 MAGNUM REVOLVER: The .44 Magnum fires magnum cartridges that have more explosive charge than cartridges of the same size. Thus, the .44 Magnum is a popular weapon in the Wastes.

DESERT EAGLE: The Desert Eagle is a .44 Magnum pistol with a longer, rifled barrel. A less common but lethal firearm, the Desert Eagle is seen most often in the hands of bandits.

14MM AUTOMATIC: Like the 10mm, the 14mm automatic is capable of single and burst modes. It fires larger rounds, and subsequently is more effective than the 10mm; however, 14mm ammo is more difficult to find.

9MM MAUSER: Already an antique weapon before the nuclear devastation, working 9mm Mausers are even rarer after the Fallout. Still, the weapon packs a wallop if appropriate rounds can be secured.

NEEDLER: The Bringham Needler Pistol was once used for scientific field studies. It uses small, hard-plastic hypodermic darts as ammo. Most hypo rounds are filled with anaesthetic; however, some hypo rounds are filled with pure poison.

.223 AUTOLOADER: This oversized pistol fires .223 rounds to exceptional effect. If this weapon has a negative aspect, it's that it doesn't have burst or autofire modes. Still, a single well-placed shot is usually sufficient to stop a mantis in its tracks.

PPK12 GAUSS: This experimental weapon is among those weapons developed on the eve of the war. It utilizes rare 2mm Electric Cartridges that are propelled by electromagnets. When the proper ammo can be found, the PPK12 ranks at the top of the scale in the cartridge pistol category for pure stopping power.

RED RYDER BB GUN: A weapon that was considered a toy even before the war, the BB gun fires loose metallic beads with bursts of pressurized air. The weapon is not good for much more than an annoyance even at close range. Of course, those who are exceptionally skilled with it can put out a foe's eye.

PIPE RIFLE: Rifles are wonderful because the long barrel allows a foe to be hit accurately from far away. Even a home-made pipe rifle, utilizing cast-off pieces of pistols and iron pipes, can hit a target far away, even if the potential damage doesn't often amount to much.

HUNTING RIFLE: The hunting rifle is a staple of prewar civilization, and no card-carrying member of the NRA was without one. Thus, after the Fallout, hunting rifles remain ubiquitous, and the .223 ammo plentiful.

SNIPER RIFLE: Made to military spec, this long-barreled rifle fires .223 cartridges accurately at extreme range, and lethally at short and mid ranges, making the weapon the preferred choice for assassins.

ASSAULT RIFLE: Assault rifles are really submachine guns in disguise; these weapons can fire single shots, bursts, or fire continuously until the magazine is exhausted. Furthermore, the assault rifle has the range equal to or better than that of standard rifles.

H&K G11: This gun revolutionized assault weapon design. It fires a caseless cartridge consisting of a slug buried in a block of propellant. The resultant weight and space savings provide for increased magazine capacity.

M72 GAUSS RIFLE: The M72 rifle is a German design. Like the Gauss pistol, the rifle uses an electromagnetic field to propel EC rounds at tremendous speed. Rounds fired from the M72 can pierce almost any obstacle; its range, accuracy, and stopping power are almost unparalleled.

SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN: A standard shotgun with a sawed-off barrel makes it almost impossible not to hit a nearby target; in fact, this shotgun variation is sometimes called a "room broom." However, the wide shot dispersal is traded for less lethality and a significantly curtailed range.

COMBAT SHOTGUN: The combat shotgun is a Winchester city-killer 12-gauge shotgun, bullpup variant. The weapon usually possesses the optional DesertWarfare environmental sealant for extra reliability.

H&K CAWS: CAWS stands for Close Assault Weapon System (while H&K stands for the company that produced this weapon: Heckler and Koch). The bullpup layout gives this close range shotgun a short, easily manageable length, while retaining sufficient length for firing high velocity shells.

PANCOR JACKHAMMER: A variant of the CAWS, this shotgun was manufactured by Pancor, an H&K rival before the war wiped out both companies. The Jackhammer is an improvement on the CAWS, utilizing sleeker design and superb rifling; it's doubtful that a better designed shotgun exists.

10MM SMG: The Heckler and Koch MP9 submachine gun, 10mm variant, is a medium-sized SMG. Particularly use-

ful because of its reliance on the still-plentiful 10mm ammo, the SMG is a favorite for Waste warriors who like to burn through ammo at an alarming rate using burst mode.

TOMMY GUN: "Tommy" stands for Thompson; a Tommy Gun is a Thompson submachine gun named after John Thompson, an American army officer who died long before the Fallout. The original Tommy Gun fired .45 caliber rounds; however, variants found in the Wastes predominantly fire .223 rounds.

H&K P90C: The Heckler and Koch P90c was just coming into use at the time of the war. The weapon's compact design makes it easy to control. The durable P90c is prized for its reliability and excessive fire power (it has both single and burst modes), all bundled in a ruggedly compact package.

M3A1 GREASE GUN: This submachine gun filled National Guard arsenals after the Army replaced it with newer weapons. However, the "grease gun" was simple and cheap to manufacture, so many remain in use, even after the time of nuclear fire.

M60: The M60 is a heavy machine gun. Its rate of fire significantly surpasses submachine guns, but its large size, weight, and general unwieldiness make it a poor choice for those untrained in its use or for those of slight frame. However, those who are trained to use a heavy machine gun, and are strong enough to do so (minimum STR of 10), are feared far and wide.

MINIGUN: Personal miniguns are multibarrled chainguns that fire 5mm ammo at muzzle velocities in excess of 60,000 RPMs. The standard Rockwell CZ53 Personal Minigun fires more rounds per burst, while the Avenger and Vindicator models are each successively more lethal than the base model.

H&K G11E: This Heckler and Koch weapon is the heavy machine gun variant of the smaller G11. Like the base model, the G11E fires a caseless cartridge consisting of a slug buried in a block of propellant, but it fires more of them at increased muzzle velocity.

FLAMETHROWER: The Flambé 450 model Flamethrower, Varmiter Variation, consists of an inline incendiary tank and gun-like nozzle. The flamethrower fires a short spray of hot, flaming liquid. Targets hit by the flaming jellied fuel usually expire in a lethal blaze, giving the 450 model its colorful Flambé appellation.

ROCKER LAUNCHER: First produced as an infantryman's antitank weapon before the war, this shoulder-fired rocket launcher is also useful against aliens, robots, mutants, and other dangers of the Wastes. Experienced users know enough not to fire the rocket launcher at targets in close proximity.

LASER PISTOL: The most common laser pistol model to survive the war in any number is the Wattz 1000 Laser Pistol. The Wattz pistol is a civilian model, so the wattage is lower than police or military versions rumored to exist. Still, the laser pistol efficiently collimates energetic photons to form a coherent beam of lethal energy. It beats standard pistols in almost every category.

SOLAR SCORCHER: A radical design, the solar scorcher was a prototype weapon that never made it into mass production. However, a few of these weapons are still found in the Wastes almost two hundred years after they were developed because these pistols don't require ammo. Instead, the solar scorcher magnifies and collates ambient sunlight for energy; in the absence of sunlight, the scorcher doesn't work.

LASER RIFLE: The laser rifle collimates light like a laser pistol. The laser rifle's extreme range makes it the weapon of choice for snipers. Because the beam remains coherent at long range, potential damage to the foe does not decrease with distance.

GATTLING LASER: Utilizing the minigun concept, the gattling laser is a military grade laser rifle with a rotating multibarrled chaingun-like configuration. Thus, the gattling laser is capable of firing "bursts" like an automatic or machine gun; however, these bursts consist of daggers of coherent light.

ALIEN LASER PISTOL: Little is known about these strange, pistol-like weapons. Reportedly found in association with creatures so strange that they might not be mutants, the alien laser pistol fires an arc of devastating energy. Its main drawback is its very short range.

YK32 PULSE PISTOL: The YK32 Pulse Pistol is an electrical pulse weapon developed by the Yuma Flats Energy Consortium prior to the end of the last civilization. Though powerful, the YK32 was never considered a powerful weapon due to its inefficient energy usage and bulky design. Still, it consistently emits more energetic pulses than a standard laser pistol.

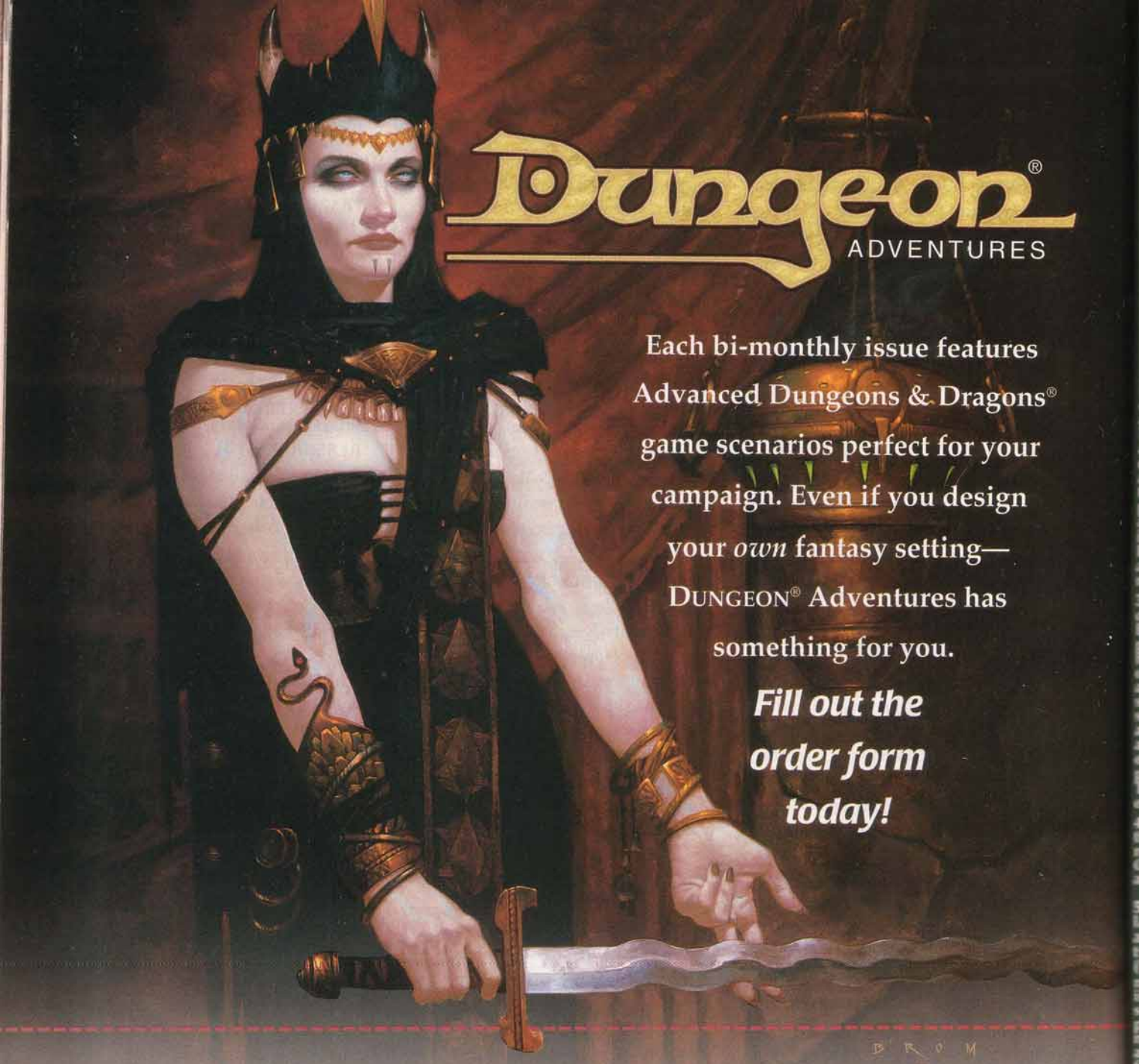
YK42B PULSE RIFLE: The YK42B is an electrical pulse weapon. Like the YK32, it was developed by the Yuma Flats Energy Consortium. However, it is considered a far superior weapon to the YK32 pistol, as it possesses increased charge capacity and range. With its increased charge capacity, it often exceeds the raw power of the vaunted plasma pistol.

PLASMA PISTOL: The Glock 86 Plasma Pistol was designed by the Gaston Glock AI; nothing designed by man comes close to the pure lethality bundled in such a small package. The plasma pistol fires bolts of superheated, stripped ions generated by the delivery of an electrical shock to a large electrochemical shell.

PLASMA RIFLE: Taking the design of the Glock AI and enlarging it, the plasma rifle was born; specifically, the Winchester Model P94 Plasma Rifle. The weapon is an industrial-grade energy weapon that fires superheated bolts of stripped ions like the plasma pistol. However, the innovation of the rifle is the introduction of a superconducting barrel, allowing the plasma to stream at unprecedented velocities.

TURBO PLASMA RIFLE: The turbo plasma rifle is an even heavier version of the "standard" plasma rifle. By not making compromises for weight and bulk, the turbo plasma rifle, while unwieldy, contains close to the maximum firepower available in a handheld personal weapon. Though range is still limited in comparison to laser weapons, bolts of plasma fired by the turbo rifle have greater range and inflict more damage than any other plasma weapon—inside the effective range, the plasma weapons beat laser weapons hands down.

Bruce loves post-holocaust scenarios, although he still flinches when his friends remind him of "gamma moths." Undeterred by past mistakes, Bruce launched a new campaign set in the aftermath of a Cheezy-Poof Quantum Cascade.


Dungeon®
ADVENTURES
Each bi-monthly issue features Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® game scenarios perfect for your campaign. Even if you design your *own* fantasy setting—DUNGEON® Adventures has something for you.
Fill out the order form today!
BROM

There's no better bargain for roleplaying adventures—save 25% or more by subscribing now.

Fill out this form and mail it, with your payment, to the address below. *(Send U.S. funds only)*

Name_____

Address _____

City_____ State/Prov._____

Country_____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Method of Payment:

☐ Check ☐ Money Order ☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA

Credit Card Number_____

MC Bank No._____ Expiration Date_____

Signature_____ Date_____

Mail this card with payment to:
DUNGEON Adventures
TSR, Inc.
P.O. Box 469107
Escondido, CA 92046-9107
or Fax to: 619-738-4805

Dungeon® ADVENTURES

Subscribers in the U.S. and Canada will receive their first issues within 8 to 10 weeks.
All prices are subject to change without notice.

Saves DMs time and money.

Subscription Type:

☐ New ☐ Renewal (enclose mailing label)

To U.S. addresseses

☐ 1 year (6 issues) for $19.95
☐ 2 years (12 issues) for $35.95
☐ 3 years (18 issues) for $49.95

To Canadian addresses

☐ 1 year (6 issues) for $24.95
☐ 2 years (12 issues) for $44.95
☐ 3 years (18 issues) for $64.95

DMDA98

DESIGN A DUNGEON CONTEST

Dungeons come in all shapes and sizes, from crumbling towers to ancient ruins, haunted crypts to monster-infested caverns. No AD&D® campaign is complete without them, and the truly magnificent dungeons linger in the players' memories long after the campaign itself has ended.

We're looking for a few great dungeons! To enter, design a map for your dungeon and include a brief description of the dungeon's origin, history, special features, and current inhabitants (if any). We're not looking for room-by-room descriptions—just a general overview.

Each entry should be limited to a **1-page map and 750 words** briefly describing the mapped location. Entries will be judged on originality, design, and AD&D game compatibility. All entries must be received by **June 28, 1999.**

Three winning entries will be selected. Each winner will receive a signed copy of the DRAGONLANCE® Classic 15th Anniversary Edition deluxe adventure, combining the complete and newly updated adventures from the original DRAGONLANCE saga (DL 1–14). *DRAGON® Magazine* also reserves the right to publish the winning entries in an upcoming issue!

Dragon® MAGAZINE

"Design a Dungeon" Contest

Name : _____

Address : _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

"Design a Dungeon" Contest Rules

1. Entry: To enter, send your completed entry form including your name, address, phone number, the contest to which your submission applies, and your proposed Map ("Entry") to TSR, Inc. ("TSR") *DRAGON Magazine* "Design a Dungeon" Contest, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707. No purchase required. You may submit as many entries as you wish, but only one Entry per submission. There is no advantage to submitting the same entry more than once. Map Entries should be 1 page, and the accompanying Dungeon Description should not exceed 750 words. If you are under 18, you must have your parent's permission to enter. Entries must be received before midnight (Pacific Time), June 28, 1999. Winners will be selected by a team of TSR judges based on the Entry's design, originality, and appropriateness. All decisions are final. The probability of winning is based exclusively on the quality of the Entries received.

2. Originality of Entry: A Map Entry may be drawn by hand or created using design software. Written descriptions accompanying the Map Entry must be in English. Entrant warrants that the Entry above is the original and exclusive work of Entrant, and that Entrant has not assigned, transferred, licensed, or sold the right to use the Entry to any other party. Entrant agrees to indemnify TSR against good faith claims of copyright infringement based on TSR's use of the Entry, but such indemnification shall not apply if it can be shown that Entrant had no access to the allegedly infringed work.

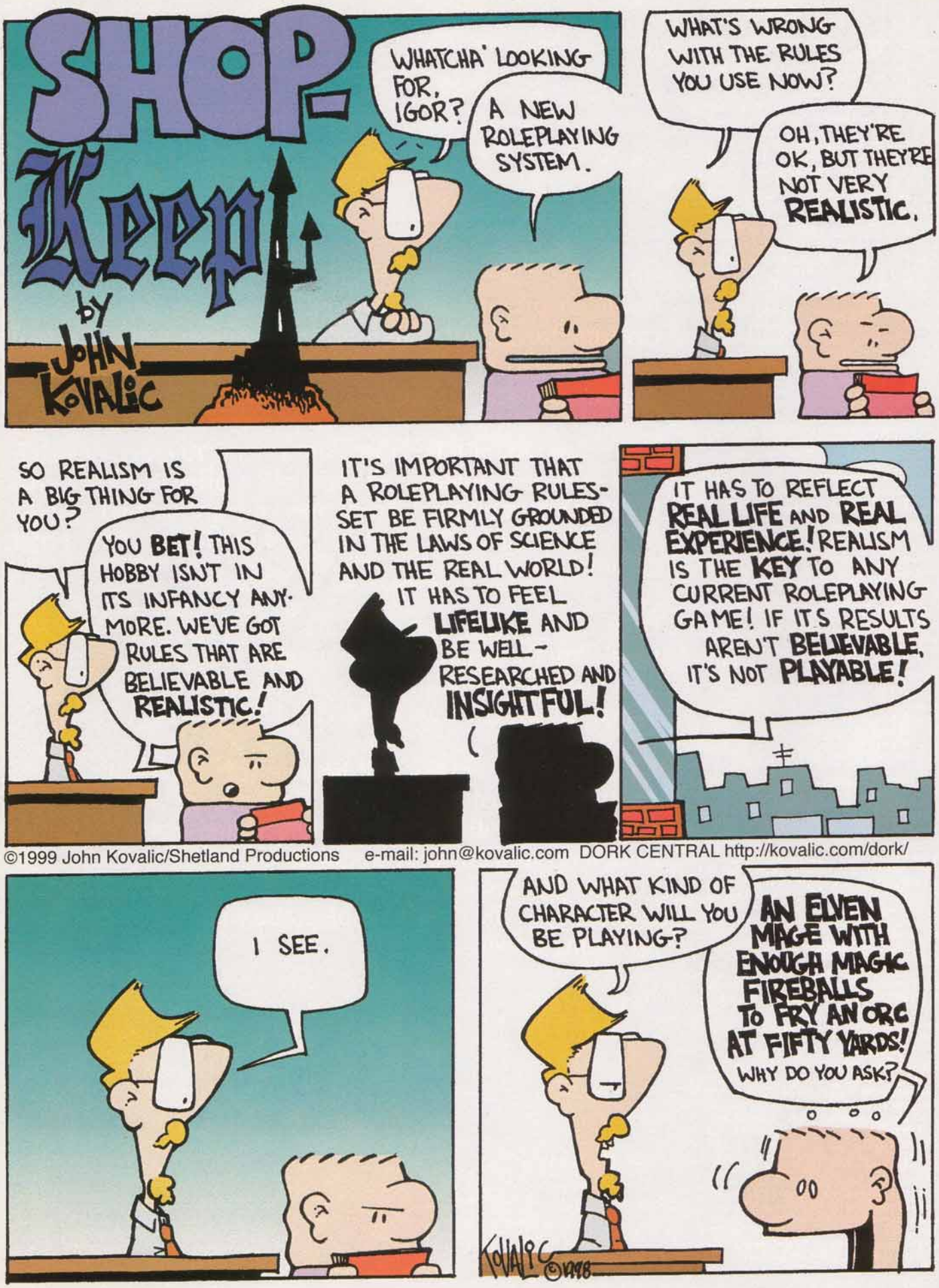
3. Use and Ownership of Entry Info: In consideration for TSR's review of Entrant's application and, if applicable, prizes awarded hereunder, Entrant transfers all rights, including all copyright ownership rights in entry to TSR and acknowledges that the Entry is hereby the sole property of TSR. It is further understood that Entrant hereby transfers any and all interest or rights that she/he acquires in Entry, including but not limited to trademark rights and copyrights and protection under 17 U.S.C. § 106 to TSR. TSR shall have no obligation for consideration other than as defined herein.

4. Prizes: The three winning Entrants of the "Design a Dungeon" Contest shall receive a signed copy of the *DRAGONLANCE® Classic 15th Anniversary Edition* deluxe adventure (value $25.95 U.S.).

5. Eligibility: Void where prohibited by law. In order to receive any prize, Entrant agrees to sign TSR's affidavit of eligibility/release of liability/prize acceptance ("Affidavit") within 5 days of receipt of notification or forfeit prize. If the winner is a minor, then the guardian must co-sign the Affidavit. By acceptance of a prize, Entrant agrees to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade, or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. TSR assumes no responsibility for, late, ineligible, incomplete, or misdirected Entries. Non-compliance with the time parameters contained herein or return of any prize/prize notification as undeliverable will result in disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. Employees of TSR, Wizards of the Coast, Inc., and their respective affiliates and distributors are not eligible.

6. Restrictions: Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All prize winners shall be notified by phone or letter. No substitutions of prizes are allowed, except at the option of TSR, should the featured prize(s) become unavailable. All federal, state, provincial, and local regulations apply. The winner is solely responsible for all applicable federal, state, provincial, and local taxes. For a list of winners, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to *DRAGON Magazine* "Design a Dungeon" Contest Winners, TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 707, Renton WA 98057. Requests for winners lists must be received by July 16, 1999. Allow 4 weeks for delivery of winners list.

AD&D and DRAGON are registered trademarks of TSR, Inc., a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. © 1999 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All Rights Reserved.


SHOP-Keep
by JOHN KOVALIC
WHATCHA' LOOKING FOR, IGOR?
A NEW ROLEPLAYING SYSTEM.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE RULES YOU USE NOW?
OH, THEY'RE OK, BUT THEY'RE NOT VERY REALISTIC.
SO REALISM IS A BIG THING FOR YOU?
YOU BET! THIS HOBBY ISN'T IN ITS INFANCY ANYMORE. WE'VE GOT RULES THAT ARE BELIEVABLE AND REALISTIC!
IT'S IMPORTANT THAT A ROLEPLAYING RULESET BE FIRMLY GROUNDED IN THE LAWS OF SCIENCE AND THE REAL WORLD! IT HAS TO FEEL LIFELIKE AND BE WELL-RESEARCHED AND INSIGHTFUL!
IT HAS TO REFLECT REAL LIFE AND REAL EXPERIENCE! REALISM IS THE KEY TO ANY CURRENT ROLEPLAYING GAME! IF IT'S RESULTS AREN'T BELIEVABLE, IT'S NOT PLAYABLE!
I SEE.
AND WHAT KIND OF CHARACTER WILL YOU BE PLAYING?
AN ELVEN MAGE WITH ENOUGH MAGIC FIREBALLS TO FRY AN ORC AT FIFTY YARDS! WHY DO YOU ASK?
KOVALIC ©1998

©1999 John Kovalic/Shetland Productions e-mail: john@kovalic.com DORK CENTRAL http://kovalic.com/dork/

DECLASSIFIED

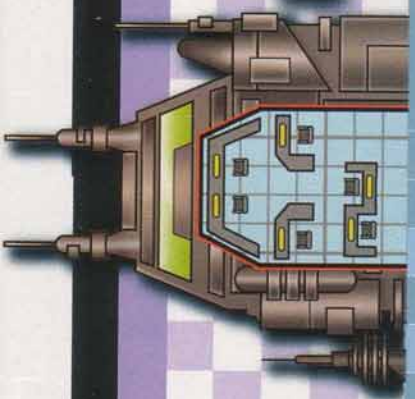
"Some starships, like some people, earn a special place in the annals of history. Their deeds and accomplishments are of such renown that no other ships may bear their names without invoking their great legacy. Some of these rare vessels are remembered for their notoriety, others for their tremendous fortitude in the face of adversity. These rare ships, much like the men and women who command them, demand our respect and attention, for these are ships of destiny. The CSS Nomad is one such ship."

—Senator Bruce Hale, Orion League, 2497

CSS Nomad

Starships Contest Winner

Engineer | Gary R. Boylan



Built in 2466, the first of the Orion League's Trinity-class trader vessels, the CSS Nomad, was designed as a "jack-of-all-trades." Lightly armored but comparatively well armed, the Nomad functioned as both an escort and trading vessel, since the original hull design included three separate cargo bays. The ship was designed to protect established trade routes where fast vessels, themselves lightly armored, would be the Nomad's most likely adversaries. The cost of neutronite armor for a ship of this size, coupled with its mission profile, was deemed too high to grant more than the lightest armor coverage.

Under the command of Captain Jack Vermillion, the Nomad proved herself in numerous small skirmishes with would-be pirates during the end of GW2. The Nomad became a small twinkle in the Orion League's eye, proving itself adept at guarding the League's assets (and effectively increasing them). Additional Trinity-class vessels were being built as early as 2470.

Late in the year 2495, the Nomad was on a trading run to one of the League's outlying colonies when it was confronted by an outdated Thuldan assault vessel, re-fitted for use as a privateer. Luckily, nearby ships were able to come to the Nomad's rescue, but not before the pirate ship mauled the Nomad. Captain Vermillion and half his crew were killed in the conflict.

Because of its distinguished service and the Orion League's declining fortunes, the Nomad was tagged for both repair and a substantial refit. The Nomad was destined to assume a very different role than it had played in the past. The Orion League needed new resources to support declining economy; the Nomad's new function was defined as one of "exploration."

The refit was extensive. Only one cargo hold remained, and it was significantly smaller. The computer core was expanded; new, more advanced stations were added, while existing ones were upgraded. A series of deflection inducers were added to the hull, and the sensors were augmented and enhanced. The Nomad was practically a new ship. The first officer, a mechalus named Tyhr Nimatus, was promoted to become the Nomad's new captain partly because of his exemplary service but also because the remaining crew wouldn't have it any other way. The Nomad was then "donated" to the Galactic Concord, becoming part of the Concord Survey Service. When the Concord fortress ship Monitor left with the reconnaissance task force in 2497, it was easy for the Orion League to pull a few strings and ensure that the Nomad left with it.

CSS Nomad

Orion Trinity-class Survey Vessel

Compartments: 5
Maneuver Rating: 0
Cruise Speed: 1.5 AU/hour
Durability: 40
Acceleration: 2 Mpp
Berthing: 18

Armament: Turret—Plasma cannon (Range: 4/8/16 Mm)
d6+2w/d8+2w/d6+1m (En(e)/A)
Arc: Forward, Left, Right
Launch tube w/10 missiles (4 SMP, 3 MRB, 3 ARN)
Defenses: Jammer, deflection inducer
Armor: Light neutronite (0 Dur)
d6 (LI), d6 (HI), d6–1 (En)
Computer: Good computer core; Good battle, defense, and sensor dedicated computers; Ordinary engineering and navigation dedicated computers
Engines: Induction engines (3)
Power: Mass reactor rated for 20 power factors
Drive: 5 light years per starfall

Roll	Compartment	Systems (Dur/Power)	Durability
1–3	Command (C1)	EM detector (0/0)	16/16/8
		IR detector (0/0)	
		Multiband radar (0/0)	
		Spectroanalyzer (1/1)	
		Jammer (0/1)	
		Deflection inducer (2/4)	
		Laser transceiver (0/1)	
		Radio transceiver (0/1)	
		Airlock (0/0)	
		Good computer core (2/0)	
		Crew quarters (3/0)	
		Reentry capsule (0/0)	
4–6	Weapons (C2)	Turret: plasma cannon (4/3)	14/14/7
		Launch tube (3/1)	
7–9	Engineering 1 (C3)	Induction engines (6/6)	18/18/9
		Stardrive (3/*)	
		Autosupport (0/2)	
10–14	Auxiliary (C4)	Mass reactor (8/*)	18/18/9
		Recycler unit (1/1)	
15–20	Engineering 2 (C5)	Workshop (2/1)	14/14/7
		Airlock (1/0)	
		Autocargo (4/4)	

CSS Nomad
Compartments

Bridge (C1): The Nomad's bridge is the nervous system of the ship, with stations provided for helm control, communications, defense command, sensors, engineering, and weapons. Station functions can be combined or transferred, as necessary. The ship's arms locker is located behind the command station. The locker holds four suits of heavy assault gear, six 11mm charge rifles, six zero-g rifles, ten 9mm zero-g pistols, ten laser pistols, and two heavy charge machine guns. Ammunition for all personal weapons aboard the ship is also stored here.

Crew Berthing (C1): The bulk of the Nomad's crew bunks in the three main crew quarters, five to a room. The captain, first officer, and chief engineer have separate staterooms. A mess deck, kitchen, and head/showers are also included.

Weapons Control (C2): The plasma cannon is controlled from an elevated internal turret assembly. Holographic displays surround the gunner, giving him or her better aiming capabilities than a standard H.U.D. The launch tube missiles are stored in an automated compartment. The missiles can be loaded and fired from this compartment or the bridge.

Main Engineering (C3): The Nomad's propulsion, power, and life support systems are controlled from innumerable displays and consoles located in this compartment.

Auxiliary (C4): The Nomad draws all of its power from the single mass reactor located in this room. A recycler unit allows the crew to go on extended voyages without worrying about critical shortages of essential supplies.

Cargo (C5): A small, automated cargo hold is located to the rear of the ship, allowing space for foodstuffs, additional missiles stored in metal crates, and various interesting finds. An airlock separates the hold from the workshop, allowing the cargo hold to be decompressed without affecting the rest of the ship.

ILLUSTRATION BY ROB LAZZARETTI
ENGINEERED BY GARY R. BOYLAN
*Gary is 24 years old and lives in Truro, Nova Scotia. Gary's interests include painting miniatures, RPGs, and architecture. Fascinated by the futuristic technology of the Star*Drive* setting, Gary wishes he could attach a deflection inducer to his grandfather's dartboard.*

CSS NOMAD

2686DX54398

1. Bridge
2. Weapons Control
3. E-Suit Storage
4. Airlock
5. Mess Hall
6. Galley
7. Head/Showers
8. Crew Quarters
9. Captain's Quarters
10. First Officer's Quarters
11. Chief Engineer's Quarters
12. Main Engineering
13. Auxiliary
14. Workshop
15. Cargo Hold

678-345-229-XZT-*

OVERVIEW

8900**5436322435454764WJH674

One square equals one meter

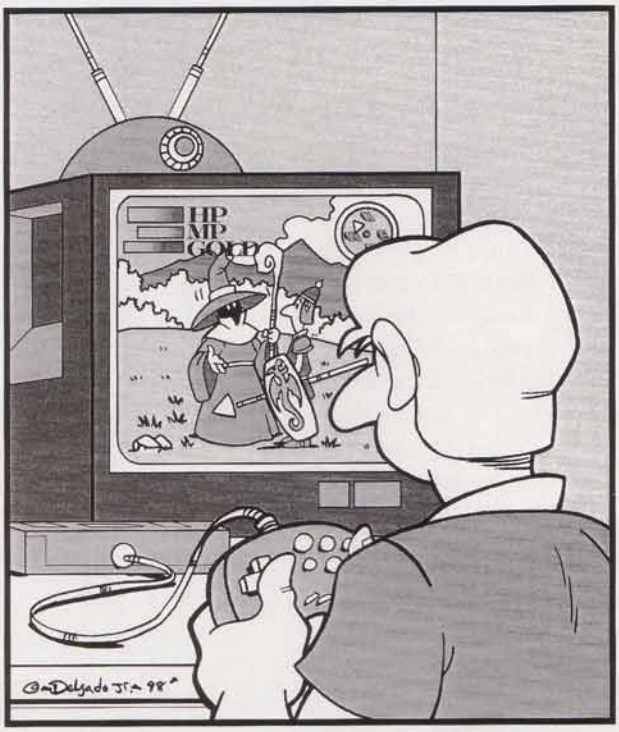
ORION TRINITY-CLASS SURVEY VESSEL

Dragon Mirth™

By Edward B. Wagner

"Ho–ho–ho, very funny. No, you can not *use* my laundry basket."

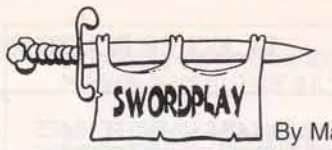
By Peter Delgado, Jr.



" I DON'T KNOW...THIS WHOLE QUEST FEELS LIKE WE'RE BEING MANIPULATED INTO DOING IT, LIKE PAWNS IN SOME SORT OF GAME..."

By Joe Pillsbury

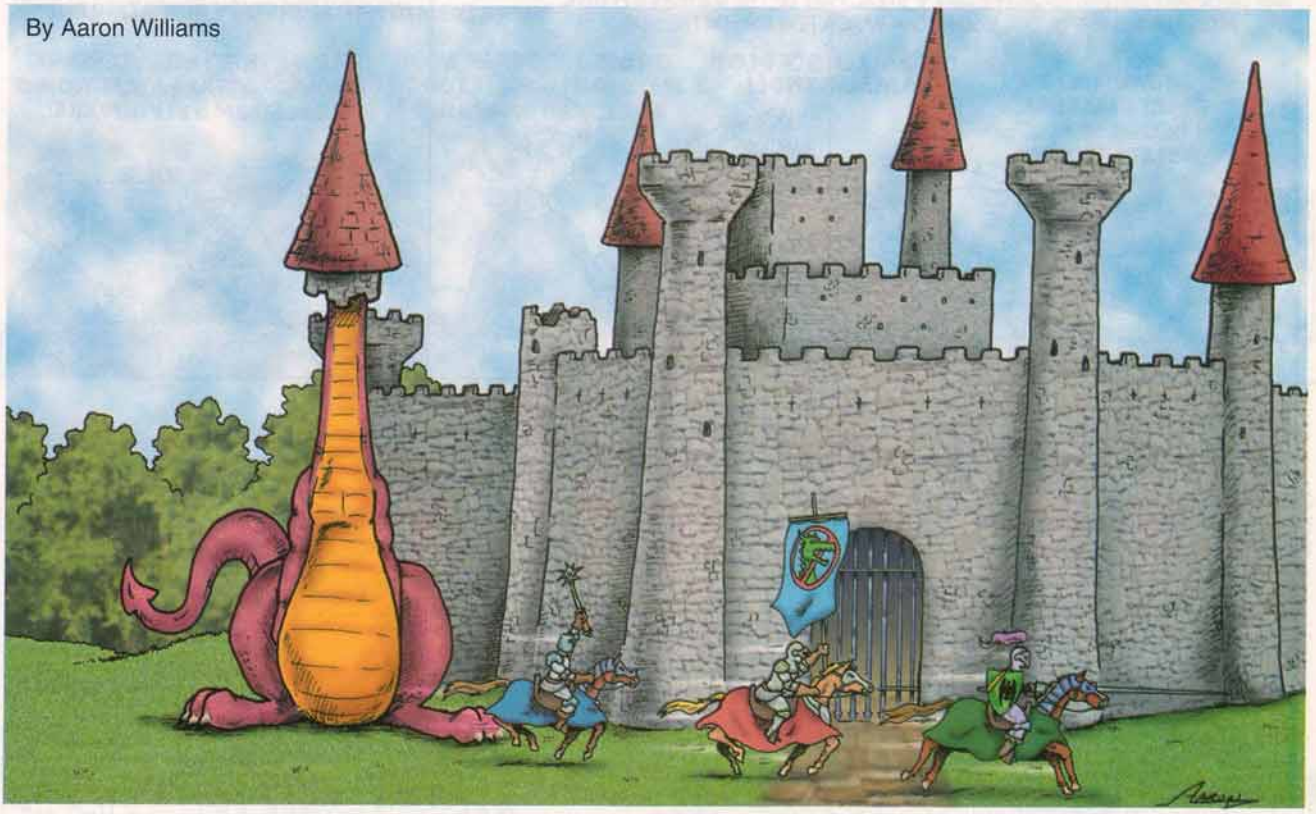
http//members.aol.com/thinkloud/



By Mathew Guss

PONDER THIS QUESTION: WHY DO WE LIVE SUCH VIOLENT LIVES?
WHY MUST WE KILL EVERYTHING WE MEET AND TAKE THEIR STUFF?
THAT'S HARDLY THE NOBLE APPROACH TO LIFE...
IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES IF, AS A RACE, WE LAID DOWN OUR WEAPONS AND TRIED TO FIND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO OUR PROBLEMS.
WHAT'S THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN... PEACE?!
WHAM WHAM WHAM WHAM WHAM WHAM WHAM WHAM WHAM
CENSORED
HEED MY WORDS, KIDS. VIOLENCE IS NO WAY TO ACCOMPLISH THINGS. AND IT ISN'T FUNNY, EITHER.
RRRRRRRR
OOO...

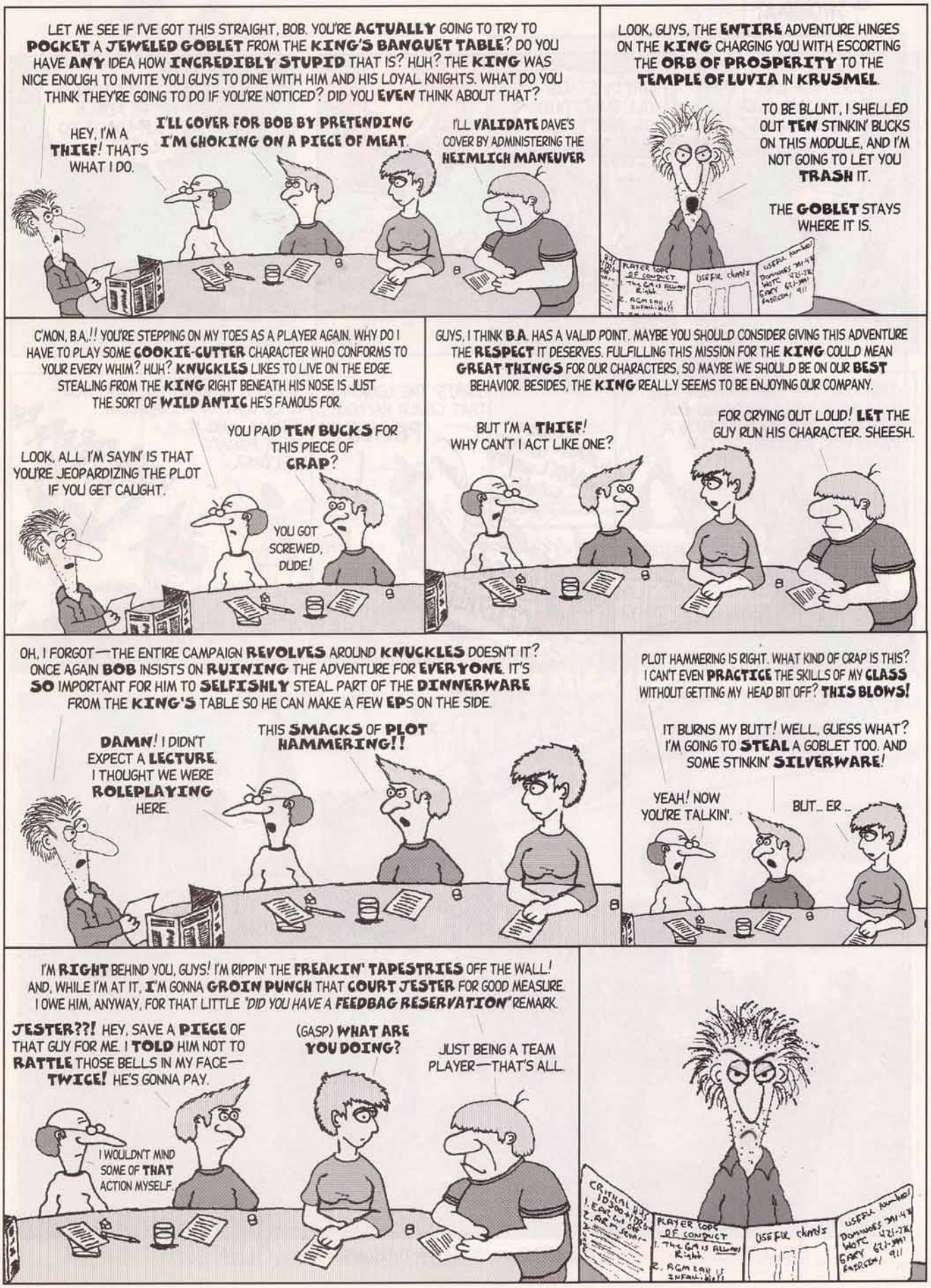
By Aaron Williams

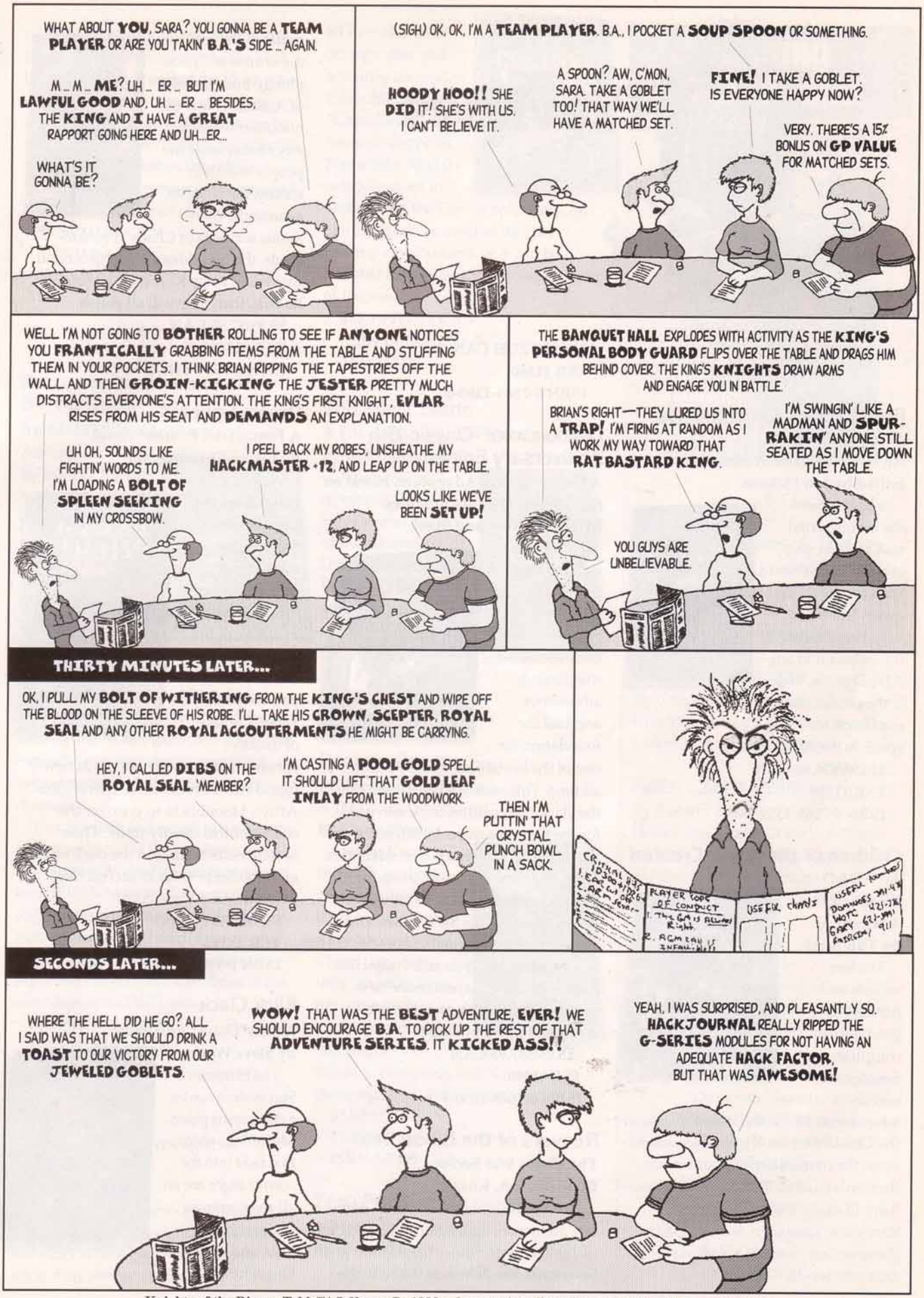


Dragon Camoflage Technique #8

Knights of the Dinner Table

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN


LET ME SEE IF I'VE GOT THIS STRAIGHT, BOB. YOU'RE ACTUALLY GOING TO TRY TO POCKET A JEWELED GOBLET FROM THE KING'S BANQUET TABLE? DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW INCREDIBLY STUPID THAT IS? HUH? THE KING WAS NICE ENOUGH TO INVITE YOU GUYS TO DINE WITH HIM AND HIS LOYAL KNIGHTS. WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY'RE GOING TO DO IF YOU'RE NOTICED? DID YOU EVEN THINK ABOUT THAT?
HEY, I'M A THIEF! THAT'S WHAT I DO.
I'LL COVER FOR BOB BY PRETENDING I'M CHOKING ON A PIECE OF MEAT.
I'LL VALIDATE DAVE'S COVER BY ADMINISTERING THE HEIMLICH MANEUVER
LOOK, GUYS, THE ENTIRE ADVENTURE HINGES ON THE KING CHARGING YOU WITH ESCORTING THE ORB OF PROSPERITY TO THE TEMPLE OF LUVIA IN KRUSMEL.
TO BE BLUNT, I SHELLED OUT TEN STINKIN' BUCKS ON THIS MODULE, AND I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU TRASH IT.
THE GOBLET STAYS WHERE IT IS.
PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT
USEFUL CHARTS
C'MON, B.A.!! YOU'RE STEPPING ON MY TOES AS A PLAYER AGAIN. WHY DO I HAVE TO PLAY SOME COOKIE-CUTTER CHARACTER WHO CONFORMS TO YOUR EVERY WHIM? HUH? KNUCKLES LIKES TO LIVE ON THE EDGE. STEALING FROM THE KING RIGHT BENEATH HIS NOSE IS JUST THE SORT OF WILD ANTIC HE'S FAMOUS FOR.
LOOK, ALL I'M SAYIN' IS THAT YOU'RE JEOPARDIZING THE PLOT IF YOU GET CAUGHT.
YOU PAID TEN BUCKS FOR THIS PIECE OF CRAP?
YOU GOT SCREWED, DUDE!
GUYS, I THINK B.A. HAS A VALID POINT. MAYBE YOU SHOULD CONSIDER GIVING THIS ADVENTURE THE RESPECT IT DESERVES. FULFILLING THIS MISSION FOR THE KING COULD MEAN GREAT THINGS FOR OUR CHARACTERS, SO MAYBE WE SHOULD BE ON OUR BEST BEHAVIOR. BESIDES, THE KING REALLY SEEMS TO BE ENJOYING OUR COMPANY.
BUT I'M A THIEF! WHY CAN'T I ACT LIKE ONE?
FOR CRYING OUT LOUD! LET THE GUY RUN HIS CHARACTER. SHEESH.
OH, I FORGOT—THE ENTIRE CAMPAIGN REVOLVES AROUND KNUCKLES DOESN'T IT? ONCE AGAIN BOB INSISTS ON RUINING THE ADVENTURE FOR EVERYONE. IT'S SO IMPORTANT FOR HIM TO SELFISHLY STEAL PART OF THE DINNERWARE FROM THE KING'S TABLE SO HE CAN MAKE A FEW EPS ON THE SIDE.
DAMN! I DIDN'T EXPECT A LECTURE. I THOUGHT WE WERE ROLEPLAYING HERE.
THIS SMACKS OF PLOT HAMMERING!!
PLOT HAMMERING IS RIGHT. WHAT KIND OF CRAP IS THIS? I CAN'T EVEN PRACTICE THE SKILLS OF MY CLASS WITHOUT GETTING MY HEAD BIT OFF? THIS BLOWS!
IT BURNS MY BUTT! WELL, GUESS WHAT? I'M GOING TO STEAL A GOBLET TOO. AND SOME STINKIN' SILVERWARE!
YEAH! NOW YOU'RE TALKIN'.
BUT... ER...
I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU, GUYS! I'M RIPPIN' THE FREAKIN' TAPESTRIES OFF THE WALL! AND, WHILE I'M AT IT, I'M GONNA GROIN PUNCH THAT COURT JESTER FOR GOOD MEASURE. I OWE HIM, ANYWAY, FOR THAT LITTLE "DID YOU HAVE A FEEDBAG RESERVATION" REMARK.
JESTER??! HEY, SAVE A PIECE OF THAT GUY FOR ME. I TOLD HIM NOT TO RATTLE THOSE BELLS IN MY FACE—TWICE! HE'S GONNA PAY.
I WOULDN'T MIND SOME OF THAT ACTION MYSELF.
(GASP) WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
JUST BEING A TEAM PLAYER—THAT'S ALL.
CRITICAL HITS
PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT
USEFUL CHARTS
USEFUL NUMBERS


WHAT ABOUT YOU, SARA? YOU GONNA BE A TEAM PLAYER OR ARE YOU TAKIN' B.A.'S SIDE ... AGAIN.
M ... M ... ME? UH ... ER ... BUT I'M LAWFUL GOOD AND, UH ... ER ... BESIDES, THE KING AND I HAVE A GREAT RAPPORT GOING HERE AND UH...ER...
WHAT'S IT GONNA BE?
(SIGH) OK, OK, I'M A TEAM PLAYER. B.A., I POCKET A SOUP SPOON OR SOMETHING.
HOODY HOO!! SHE DID IT! SHE'S WITH US. I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
A SPOON? AW, C'MON, SARA. TAKE A GOBLET TOO! THAT WAY WE'LL HAVE A MATCHED SET.
FINE! I TAKE A GOBLET. IS EVERYONE HAPPY NOW?
VERY. THERE'S A 15% BONUS ON GP VALUE FOR MATCHED SETS.
WELL I'M NOT GOING TO BOTHER ROLLING TO SEE IF ANYONE NOTICES YOU FRANTICALLY GRABBING ITEMS FROM THE TABLE AND STUFFING THEM IN YOUR POCKETS. I THINK BRIAN RIPPING THE TAPESTRIES OFF THE WALL AND THEN GROIN-KICKING THE JESTER PRETTY MUCH DISTRACTS EVERYONE'S ATTENTION. THE KING'S FIRST KNIGHT, EVLAR RISES FROM HIS SEAT AND DEMANDS AN EXPLANATION.
UH OH, SOUNDS LIKE FIGHTIN' WORDS TO ME. I'M LOADING A BOLT OF SPLEEN SEEKING IN MY CROSSBOW.
I PEEL BACK MY ROBES, UNSHEATHE MY HACKMASTER +12, AND LEAP UP ON THE TABLE.
LOOKS LIKE WE'VE BEEN SET UP!
THE BANQUET HALL EXPLODES WITH ACTIVITY AS THE KING'S PERSONAL BODY GUARD FLIPS OVER THE TABLE AND DRAGS HIM BEHIND COVER. THE KING'S KNIGHTS DRAW ARMS AND ENGAGE YOU IN BATTLE.
BRIAN'S RIGHT—THEY LURED US INTO A TRAP! I'M FIRING AT RANDOM AS I WORK MY WAY TOWARD THAT RAT BASTARD KING.
I'M SWINGIN' LIKE A MADMAN AND SPUR-RAKIN' ANYONE STILL SEATED AS I MOVE DOWN THE TABLE.
YOU GUYS ARE UNBELIEVABLE.
THIRTY MINUTES LATER...
OK, I PULL MY BOLT OF WITHERING FROM THE KING'S CHEST AND WIPE OFF THE BLOOD ON THE SLEEVE OF HIS ROBE. I'LL TAKE HIS CROWN, SCEPTER, ROYAL SEAL AND ANY OTHER ROYAL ACCOUTERMENTS HE MIGHT BE CARRYING.
HEY, I CALLED DIBS ON THE ROYAL SEAL. 'MEMBER?
I'M CASTING A POOL GOLD SPELL. IT SHOULD LIFT THAT GOLD LEAF INLAY FROM THE WOODWORK.
THEN I'M PUTTIN' THAT CRYSTAL PUNCH BOWL IN A SACK.
CRITICAL HIT TABLE
PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT
USEFUL CHARTS
USEFUL NUMBERS
SECONDS LATER...
WHERE THE HELL DID HE GO? ALL I SAID WAS THAT WE SHOULD DRINK A TOAST TO OUR VICTORY FROM OUR JEWELED GOBLETS.
WOW! THAT WAS THE BEST ADVENTURE, EVER! WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE B.A. TO PICK UP THE REST OF THAT ADVENTURE SERIES. IT KICKED ASS!!
YEAH, I WAS SURPRISED, AND PLEASANTLY SO. HACKJOURNAL REALLY RIPPED THE G-SERIES MODULES FOR NOT HAVING AN ADEQUATE HACK FACTOR, BUT THAT WAS AWESOME!

Knights of the Dinner Table™ © KenzerCo 1999 • Internet: http://members.aol.com/relkin/kenzerco.html
Send story ideas to jollyrb@aol.com or KODT, 1003 Monroe Pike, Marion, IN 46953

Previews

MAY

Priest's Spell Compendium, Volume One

An AD&D® Game Accessory
Edited by Jon Pickens

It begins here—the monumental task of collecting every official Priest spell for the AD&D game. All spells have been updated for inclusion in any AD&D game. This is the official reference book for Priest spells in the AD&D game.

$24.95/$36.95 CAN
TSR 11359
ISBN 0-7869-1359-2

Children of the Night: Created

An AD&D RAVENLOFT® Adventure,
By TSR Staff

Thirteen unique and horrifying golems with complete descriptions and short adventures. This is the fourth release in the Children of the Night series, based upon the tremendously popular Van Richten's Guides. These terrifying creatures fit easily into an ongoing RAVENLOFT campaign or any AD&D game setting. Suitable for all player character levels.

$18.95/$27.95 CAN
TSR 11360
ISBN 0-7869-1360-6

DRAGONLANCE® Classic 15th Anniversary Edition

A DRAGONLANCE Adventure, based on the original DL 1–14 modules.
By Steve Miller and Stan!

Fifteen years ago, the fourteen-part DRAGONLANCE adventure cycle redefined roleplaying adventures and laid the foundation for one of the bestselling fantasy settings of all time. This anniversary edition puts the classic adventures back into print for the first time in years, offers material never before presented in adventure form, and contains information for using the adventures with either the AD&D game or the SAGA® rules. DMs can recreate the original Chronicles trilogy by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman or let their players create new heroes to blaze their own legends across the world of Krynn.

$25.95/$37.95 CAN
TSR 11350
ISBN 0-7869-1350-9

Reavers of the Blood Sea

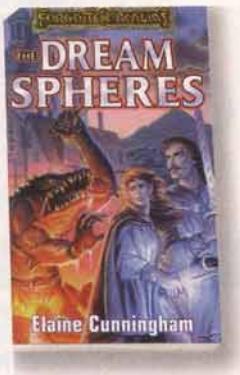
The Chaos War Series
By Richard A. Knaak

During the hottest summer in memory, minotaurs fight against the Knights of Takhisis, into whose hands their god Sargonnas has delivered them. In the midst of the conflict, the armies of Chaos plunge into the heart of Ansalon. Now the minotaur warrior Aryx must unite his people and their enemy, the Knights, against the monstrous servants of Chaos. If he succeeds, the two sides may forge a bond that will change Krynn for all time. If he fails, then they will all perish.

$5.99/$7.95 CAN
TSR 21345
ISBN 0-7869-1345-2

Dream Spheres

A FORGOTTEN REALMS® novel
By Elaine Cunningham



Welcome to Waterdeep, the City of Splendors. Here, everything imaginable is for sale. Even dreams can be purchased, if one is willing to pay the price. When the sale of dream spheres threatens the life of his newfound half-sister, Danilo Thann joins Arilyn Moonblade to uncover the source of this deadly trade. Their search leads them into the dark heart of Waterdeep—and to secrets that could destroy them both.

$5.99/$7.95 CAN
TSR 21342
ISBN 0-7869-1342-8

Klick Clack

A STAR*DRIVE® Adventure
By Steve Winter

The Hammer's Star system can be a dangerous place. Mysterious ships that fade into the cosmic night are an all-too-common occurrence out here, and it's also a haven for what

could be humanity's worst enemy: the klicks. A chance encounter with a klick base camp in the heart of the Vicek asteroid belt places the heroes amid their worst enemy. What dark secrets can be revealed by exploring the base? What is the driving force behind the klicks' determination to remain in this system? What is the better part of valor?

$9.95/$14.95 CAN
TSR 11364
ISBN 0-7869-1364-9

JUNE

Return to the Keep on the Borderlands

An AD&D Silver Anniversary Adventure
By John D. Rateliff

Venture back to the Keep on the Borderlands and the Caves of Chaos, where fell creatures wait for unwary adventurers. This presentation of the famous E. Gary Gygax D&D® adventure allows characters to re-explore the best-selling adventure of all time! Updated for use with the AD&D game, this adventure expands upon the original, providing even more thrills for beginning-level characters.

This re-telling and sequel to the classic adventure is part of the year-long Silver Anniversary celebration. See how your new AD&D characters fare against the original proving ground for D&D heroes. Includes an updated map of the original adventuring region, as well as an expanded storyline in the tradition of the early days of the D&D game.

$12.95/$18.95 CAN
ISBN 0-7869-1327-4
TSR 11327

Skullport

An AD&D Forgotten Realms Accessory
By Joseph Wolf

Directly below glorious Waterdeep, adjacent to infamous Undermountain, lies a city where good and evil put aside their eternal conflict to live and let live: Skullport. Strange sites and activities abound in this subterranean "Casablanca." This resource supports Forgotten Realms campaigns set in and around the City of Splendors, but Skullport can be used as its own gaming environment, or it can be adapted for any world that needs a city of thieves.

$18.95/$27.95 CAN
ISBN 0-7869-1348-7
TSR 11348

The Silent Blade

A Forgotten Realms Novel
By R.A. Salvatore

A paperback reprint of R.A. Salvatore's chronicle of the adventures of Drizzt Do'Urden, Wulfgar, and their greatest foe, the assassin Artemis Entreri.

$6.99/$8.95 CAN
TSR 21388
ISBN 0-7869-1388-6

Dezra's Quest

Bridges of Time Series
A Dragonlance Novel
By Chris Pierson

During Krynn's Second Cataclysm an ambitious centaur chieftain makes a terrible pact with Chaos. Ten years later, smarting from the consequences of that pact, a lone centaur journeys to Solace, seeking help from Caramon, the aging Hero of the Lance.

$5.99/$6.95 CAN
TSR 21368
ISBN 0-7869-1368-1

Zero Point

A Star*Drive Novel
By Richard Baker

Peter Sokolov, a bounty hunter and

Coming Attractions

Cover by Jeff Easley

Greater Drakes & Riders

By Johnathan M. Richards

Dragons are too big, and lesser drakes are too small, so here are six new aerial steeds that are just right.

Draconic Designs

By Gregory W. Detwiler

Give your dragons a makeover and keep your players guessing.

Ares™: Zero Point

By Richard Baker

Heroes and villains of the Star*Drive universe, ready to infiltrate your Alternity® game campaign.

The Honor of Two Swords

By Kate Novak-Grubb

When a mysterious stranger lures Ishi Barasume to another plane, it's up to Priam Agrivar to learn the reason.

Plus
"Dungeon Mastery,"
"Bazaar of the Bizarre,"
"Dragon Ecologies,"
"Nodwick,"
"Dungeoncraft,"
and more!

$4.95 U.S./$6.50 CAN
TSR Product No. 082259

Coming Attractions

Cover by Tony Szczudlo

Preemptive Strike

by Paul Culotta

An army of fire giants threatens the kingdom of Lungardy, and only a lightning strike against the enemy's supply base can turn the war. An AD&D adventure for levels 10–14.

First People

by Kent Ertman

For centuries, the Wind-Reaver has protected the inhabitants of the lost valley. Now the Wind-Reaver is asleep, and brave heroes are needed to defend the valley in his stead. An AD&D adventure for levels 4–6.

The Scourge of Scalabar

by Christopher Perkins

A terrible monster is threatening the seaways, and the merchants of Scalabar are up in arms. Who is willing to join the hunt? An AD&D adventure for levels 1–3.

Night of the Bloodbirds

by Brian Corvello

Winged marauders are preying on the local cattle, but they are the least of your worries! An AD&D adventure for levels 5–7.

$4.95 U.S./$6.50 CAN
TSR Product No. 82074

cybernetic killer for hire, is caught up in a deadly struggle for power and supremacy in the black abyss between the stars.

$5.99/$7.95 CAN
TSR 21367
ISBN 0-7869-1367-3

JULY

Carnival

An AD&D RAVENLOFT® Accessory
By John Mangrum and Steve Miller

The mysterious Carnival rolls into town from out of the Mists, where it astounds, entertains, and occasionally repulses before disappearing. This eerie sideshow is an infamous feature of the Demiplane of Dread, yet Carnival can inspire dread in any AD&D campaign. *Carnival* includes the freakish inhabitants of the sideshow, adventure hooks, and rules for turning player characters into terrifying freaks if they linger too long among the wagons of Carnival.

$13.95/$20.95 CAN
TSR 11382
ISBN 0-7869-1382-7

FORGOTTEN REALMS Interactive Atlas

An AD&D Electronic Media Utility
Programming by ProFantasy Ltd.

This CD-ROM is a dream come true for FORGOTTEN REALMS fans, featuring a complete interactive atlas of the entire planet of Abeir-Toril! All overland, city, and dungeon maps of the Realms, including all-new maps, are available to view and print. All maps are fully compatible with and editable in *AD&D Core Rules CD-ROM 2.0* and *Campaign Cartographer 2*.

Price: TBD
TSR 11451
ISBN 0-7869-1451-3

Star Compendium: Systems of the Verge

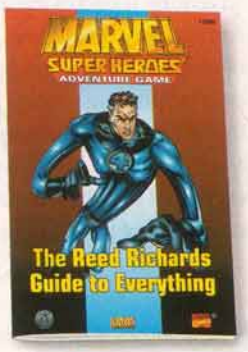
An ALTERNITY STAR*DRIVE Accessory
By David Eckelberry

The Star Compendium provides detailed information on dozens of star systems in the STAR*DRIVE setting. It includes star systems identified in earlier products, as well as new systems revealed here for the first time—with maps, planetary information, native life forms, adventure hooks, and more. For the STAR*DRIVE campaign or any space opera setting using the ALTERNITY game.

$21.95/$31.95 CAN
TSR 11371
ISBN 0-7869-1371-1

The Reed Richards Guide to Everything

A MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Adventure Game Accessory
By Mike Selinker

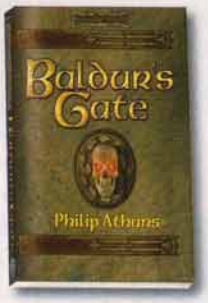


Mister Fantastic, Earth's preeminent super-genius and leader of the Fantastic Four, explains how things work in this one-of-a-kind guide to the World's Greatest Comics! Includes optional rules and a special full-color section that makes this perfect for both comics fans and gamers.

$16.95/$24.95 CAN
TSR 11340
ISBN 0-7869-1340-1

Baldur's Gate

A FORGOTTEN REALMS Novel
By Philip Athans

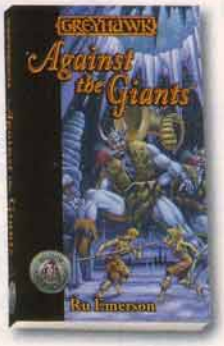


A novelization of the bestselling computer game from Interplay. The son of a dead god fights his way along the Sword Coast in search of a truth that could rip the world apart.

$5.99/$7.95 CAN
TSR 21525
ISBN 0-7869-1525-0

Against the Giants

A GREYHAWK® Novel
By Ru Emerson

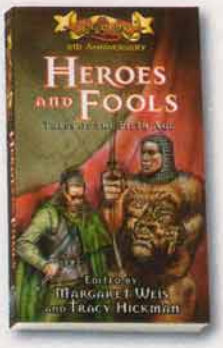


The first in a new line of fantasy adventure novels set in the classic world of Greyhawk. Brave heroes battle fierce giants in one of the most popular AD&D adventure series.

$5.99/$7.95 CAN
TSR 21379
ISBN 0-7869-1379-7

Heroes and Fools: Tales of the Fifth Age

A DRAGONLANCE Anthology
Edited by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman



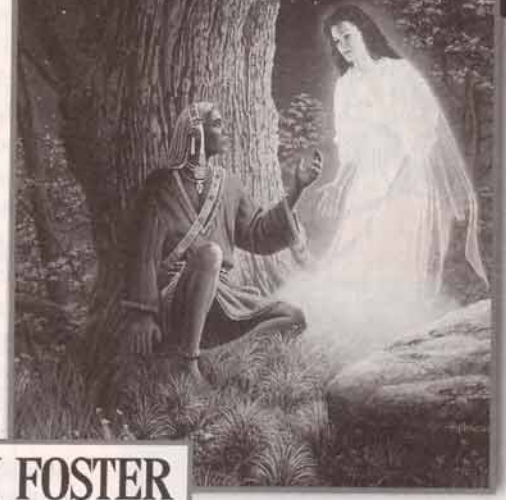
An anthology of stories from prominent DRAGONLANCE authors, describing the terrible battles and brave exploits of heroes during the first decades of the Fifth Age.

$6.99/$8.95 CAN
TSR 21346
ISBN 0-7869-1346-0

New this month from Warner

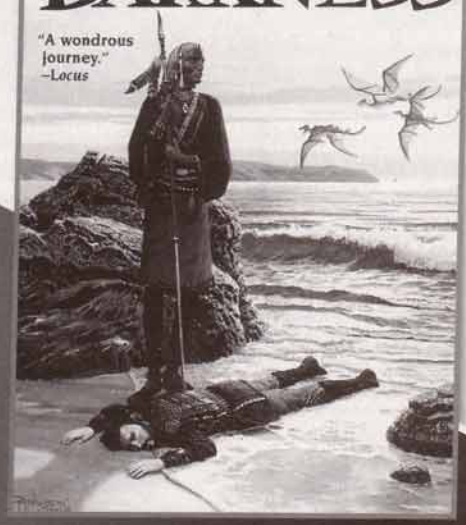
ASPECT

ALAN DEAN FOSTER
JOURNEYS OF THE CATECHIST • BOOK 2
INTO THE THINKING KINGDOMS



"One of the most consistently inventive and fertile writers of science fiction and fantasy."
–*The Times* (London)
A new hardcover

ALAN DEAN FOSTER
JOURNEYS OF THE CATECHIST • BOOK 1
CARNIVORES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS



"Odd and engaging... a wondrous journey." –*Locus*

"Inventive and filled with flavorsome incident."
–*Kirkus Reviews*
Now in paperback

ASPECT

Visit our Web site at www.warnerbooks.com
WHERE IMAGINATION KNOWS NO BOUNDS

THE ASPECT NAME AND LOGO ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF TIME WARNER TRADE PUBLISHING, INC. ©1999 TIME WARNER TRADE PUBLISHING, INC.

ProFiles

SUE COOK

After reigning over the world of Krynn, **Sue Cook returns to her roots** and plans to tell some *Amazing® Stories*.

by Stephen Kenson

Sue Weinlein Cook has always loved stories, especially science fiction and fantasy stories. She now puts that passion to good use as the managing editor of *Amazing Stories*, the world's first science fiction magazine.

Born in Green Bay, Wisconsin, Sue grew up in the Milwaukee area. After a few years in Tennessee, she returned to Milwaukee to attend Marquette University, where she earned degrees in Journalism and Spanish. In college, Sue made her first TSR® contact.

"I was at a science fiction convention where I attended a panel on writing and editing books in a shared world series. James Lowder, then an editor with the TSR book department, was on it. I talked with him afterward about his job, and he invited me to tour the TSR offices in Lake Geneva." Eighteen months after her tour, Sue applied for a position at TSR as an editorial assistant and was hired.

Since joining TSR in 1992, Sue has worked as the book department's editorial assistant, a games editor and designer, assistant creative director for the DRAGONLANCE® line, and brand manager for the DRAGONLANCE: FIFTH AGE® and MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Adventure Game lines.

Sue's interest in storytelling stems from her earliest gaming experiences. "My first exposure to the D&D® game was in junior high. However—and I'm embarrassed to admit this in the pages of *DRAGON® Magazine*—I really didn't get it at first. I just couldn't make the transition from board games to roleplaying games. For instance, the game said the dwarf's movement rate was 6 and the human's was 12. 'How can they stay together on the board?' I wondered. I didn't realize then that, in a roleplaying game, the characters aren't just playing pieces; the human can choose to slow down and wait for slower companions!"

Sue's experiences at TSR strengthened her interest in the storytelling side of roleplaying games. She helped design the award-winning SAGA® game rules—with their emphasis on dramatic action—and helped lay the foundation for the exciting Fifth Age of Krynn.

"I am extremely pleased to have been part of the DRAGONLANCE team. Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman were a pleasure to work with, and both the FIFTH AGE design team and the more recent team have been excellent creative groups. Working with them has given me inspiration, confidence, and friendship. We always managed to bring out the best in each other."

Sue was involved with the production of the special DRAGONLANCE Fifteenth Anniversary Edition as one of her last projects in the world of Krynn. In October of 1998, she took an opportunity to move to the Wizards of the Coast Periodicals division to become the managing editor of *AMAZING Stories*.

"I tell people it's because Periodicals is the one department I haven't worked in, but the truth is there are very few jobs that could have taken me away from DRAGONLANCE, and this was one of them. It's an honor working on a publication with the history and reputation of *AMAZING Stories*." The magazine is the oldest science fiction publication in the world, started by Hugo Gernsback in 1926. TSR published *AMAZING Stories* from 1982 until 1995, when the magazine went on hiatus. It returned in 1998 as a quarterly publication.

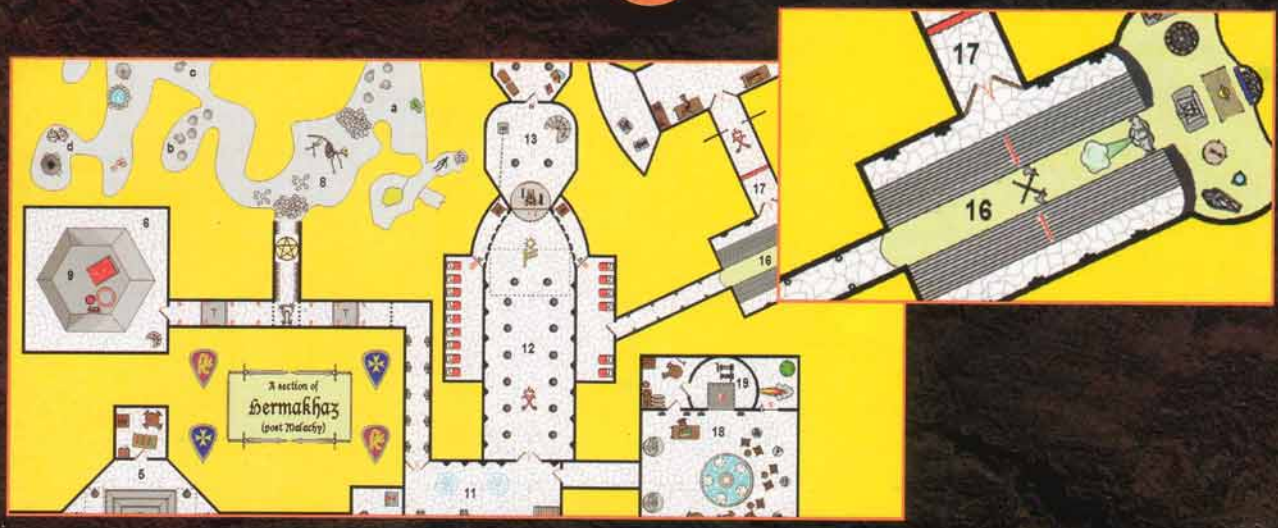
AMAZING Stories made history again by becoming the first SF magazine to publish shared-world media-related fiction along with original stories. "We have *Star Trek*, *Starcraft*, *Babylon 5* and STAR*DRIVE® stories," Sue says. "We recognize that the SF genre has changed, and we want to represent the genre as a whole. These days, that includes shared worlds.

"It's a real treat to be working in science fiction again," says Sue, adding that she looks forward to having the opportunity to discover the great SF writers of the future. "There's so much good material out there we'd like to feature. *AMAZING Stories* is interested in discovering new talent as well as publishing current authors. We always read submissions, and prospective authors can write to us for guidelines. I'm still a big science fiction fan, and I can't wait to discover the next SF gem that comes in!"

Windows® 95/98 & Windows® NT 4

New from Profantasy Software Ltd

Dungeon Designer 2



Dungeon Designer 2 is the eagerly awaited first add-on product for Campaign Cartographer 2 and the Core Rules 2.0 Campaign Mapper.

For CC2 and Campaign Mapper users
DD2 has over 400 stunning symbols to make dungeon maps and floor plans beautiful. There are symbols for devious traps, doors, windows, strange statues, temple features and many others. You can create simple, distinctive generic maps or create professional quality full colour artwork for RPG publications.

For CC2 users
A single button click takes you to a new set of menus and icons that give you walls, easy corridors, t-junctions, crossroads as well as shortcuts to the different symbol catalogs. Break doors into walls with ease. DD2 has an optional "tiled" approach to building dungeons and dungeon sections that lets you prepare and print a dungeon design in minutes.

Dungeon Designer 2 is US$36.95 in the US and Canada, £24.95 in the rest of the world.
Upgrade for DOS users of Dungeon Designer US$27.95 in the US and Canada, £18.95 elsewhere.

TO ORDER
If your retailer does not stock Dungeon Designer 2
Internet go to ProFantasy's website at http://www.profantasy.com
In the US and Canada phone 1-800-841-1487 (Shipping $7.00, Rush Shipping $12.50)
Elsewhere phone UK 0171 738 8877 or fax UK 0171 738 8282 (£5.00 P&P UK, £10.00 elsewhere)

Questions?
e-mail dd2@profantasy.com or call our pre-sales enquiry line on 1-800-281-2411 8AM-8PM Hawaii Standard Time

Requirements
DD2 requires Campaign Cartographer 2 or AD&D® Core Rules 2.0 Campaign Mapper.
System requirements are any PC that runs Windows® 95/NT4/98 and an 800x600 display

The design revolution goes underground!

Campaign Mapper, AD&D and Core Rules 2.0 are trademarks owned by TSR. Windows is a trademark owned by the Microsoft Corporation.
Other trademarks are owned by **ProFantasy Software Ltd.**

FORGOTTEN REALMS

Baldur's Gate™

Tales of the Sword Coast™

Legends of treasures lost and monsters to be defeated abound in the region. Almost all have at least some basis in truth. Are you up to the task? Will you return with even more fame than you accumulated in your previous travels? Or will you journey off; never to be heard from again-the source of your *own* legend, in turn...?

Continue your adventures with the character you created in the original game.

Join up with new friends or meet old enemies.

More powerful spells, talkative NPCs, and additional enchanted items to be found.

Multiplayer support - up to 6 players via modem, LAN, or Internet.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® BIOWARE® CORP

Windows 95/98

www.interplay.com/bgtales

TEEN T ESRB

Interplay BY GAMERS. FOR GAMERS.™

BLACK ISLE STUDIOS

Includes ROGER WILCO™ voice communication software to chat while playing!

BALDUR'S GATE Tales of the Sword Coast: ©1999 BioWare Corp. All Rights Reserved. BioWare Infinity Engine ©1998 BioWare Corp. All Rights Reserved. Baldur's Gate, Baldur's Gate Tales of the Sword Coast, Forgotten Realms, the Forgotten Realms logo, Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, the AD&D logo, TSR and the TSR logo are trademarks of TSR, Inc., a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc., and are used by Interplay under license. Black Isle Studios and the Black Isle Studios logo, Interplay, the Interplay logo, and "By Gamers. For Gamers." are trademarks of Interplay Productions. BioWare, the BioWare logo, and The BioWare Infinity Engine are trademarks of BioWare Corp. Exclusively licensed and distributed by Interplay Productions. All other trademarks and copyrights are property of their respective owners.